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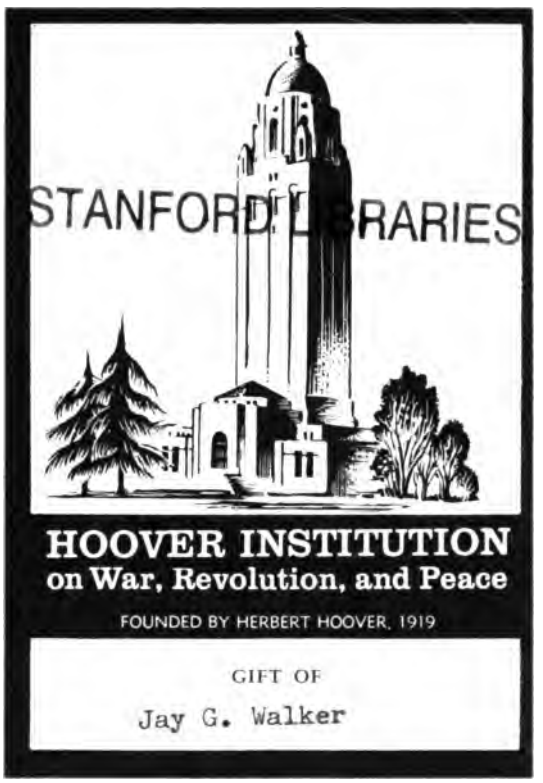

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A MINOR MOSQUE, KAIROUAN

TUNIS

KAIROUAN & CARTHAGE

DESCRIBED AND ILLUSTRATED
WITH FORTY-EIGHT PAINTINGS
BY GRAHAM PETRIE, R.I.

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1908

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

AMONG the many books concerning the history of Tunisia which I have consulted, those included in the following list have proved the more interesting and profitable. To their authors I gratefully acknowledge my indebtedness, and tender my cordial thanks, confidently recommending their pages to readers who would supplement my modest essays with more substantial fare, and bridge the gaps between some scattered fragments from the grim chronicles of Time.

"The Roman History of Appian of Alexandria" (translated from the Greek by Horace White); "Figures et Récits de Carthage Chrétienne" (Abel Alcais); "Histoire Générale de la Tunisie" (Abel Clarin de la Rive); "Carthage and the Carthaginians" (R. Bosworth Smith); "L'Afrique Romaine" (Gaston Boissier); "Carthage" (Ernest Babelon); "Carthage of the Phœnicians" (Mabel Moore).

G. P.

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INTRODUCTION

TUNIS, as one finds her to-day, retains so much of her Oriental character, and offers such a rich and varied menu to those who feel the glamour of the East, that to some it will doubtless seem sufficient to feast their eyes on the fascinating pictures revealed at every turn of her tortuous streets, careless of her origin and her chequered history during 3,000 years.

There are those who may think that there is interest and excitement enough in wandering beneath the vaulted roofs of her arcaded bazaars, so richly furnished with masterpieces of the carpet-weaver's art, the embroiderer's skill, the metal-worker's cunning, and the potter's craft.

Many a pleasant hour may be spent in examining at leisure the strange medley of costly art treasures, and valueless but attractive rubbish, so temptingly displayed by dusky merchants, whose dignity of appearance and suavity of manner seem to forbid the discussion of price. It is true that dignity will not prevent them from asking five times the market

value of their goods, but no one can resent what is but a delicate form of flattery, a testimony to their exalted estimate of the financial resources of the customer. One may accept the compliment, and admire the traditional etiquette, while firmly refusing to pay the price.

But if it is delightful to find oneself surrounded by things fashioned on old tradition, and free from the dull uniform imprint of the machine, it is still more interesting to see the craftsmen at their work. To watch the dyers as they plunge their wool and silk into huge terra-cotta vessels of antique design, their bare limbs deeply stained by the colours employed; to note with what incredible rapidity the silk-weaver evolves, in many harmonious colours, the intricate pattern of his design; to observe how tightly the carpet-maker compresses his little tufts of wool, and thereby learn how the Eastern carpet lasts for centuries where its European counterpart only lasts for years; to marvel at the patience of the metal-worker as he laboriously chisels, on a copper bowl, the lines and spaces which will afterwards be filled with rarer metals by the damascener's art.

In the labyrinthine maze of sinuous streets it is easy to lose one's way; but one can always find it again by the compass of a familiar dome or graceful minaret, which stands out in startling brilliancy

of purest white against a low-toned sky, and then one feels that in losing and finding one has enjoyed a double pleasure.

Should you feel tired, an Arab café is always at hand to offer you its hospitality. There you may rest, surrounded by a crowd of bernoused figures, with complexions of every shade, from blue-black to blonde; and there you may study, while sipping your coffee, the varied types of your neighbours. A group of grave patriarchs are stroking their long beards, and gesticulating with slender fingers, as they discuss the meaning of some obscure passage from the Koran. Near them a huge and gorgeously-attired negro is inhaling tobacco-smoke through serpentine coils of green tubing from a quaint hubble-bubble. In contrast to the grave decorum of their elders, some gay youths are shouting and laughing as they rattle the dice on a backgammon board, while, behind them, a pale, emaciated-looking man is taking furtive whiffs from the tiny, but deadly hashish pipe.

The attitudes of this strange crowd are as varied as their physiognomies, and many of them recall familiar personages of the past. Wearily stretched on a divan, a handsome middle-aged man, in a scarlet silk robe, looks as if he might be posing for a picture of "The Remorse of Nero"; while the gaunt, patient figure standing near him, whose bones

are covered by nothing but skin, and whose skin is only half covered by rags, might surely serve as a model of Lazarus.

Of Biblical friends there seems to have been a universal resurrection. Abraham, Isaac, and all the prophets are clearly recognizable, and also Solomon in all his glory. The Wise Men of the East become quite familiar acquaintances, while Joseph, in his coat of many colours, loses something of his distinction by his ubiquity.

In an open square the wonderful performance of the snake-charmer is being given within its circle of squatting children, to whom this exhibition is a never-failing source of delight and terror. Across the way his rival, the sand-diviner, is playing with the credulity of his patrons, while near him the professional story-teller relates thrilling love tales from the "Arabian Nights."

Some Jewesses, in tiny white satin slippers, totter across the street, and one wonders how they have succeeded in attaining the maximum proportions of female corpulence, so satisfying to their husbands' ideal of grace and beauty. Behind them are some Arab women of the better class, by whom the outer world can only be seen through a thin, black veil, held to the shoulders with upstretched arms, forming a kind of tent, under which it is difficult to believe that

IN THE SOUK-EL-ATTARIN, KAIROUAN

an unfortunate woman is trying to breathe and see.

These sights, and a thousand others, equally strange and novel to those who for the first time find themselves in an Oriental city, are so fascinating and absorbing that they seem to enchain one to the present, and to leave no room for thoughts about history. But though the glitter of colour and light, and the charm of watching these ever-changing scenes of unfamiliar life, may satisfy and delight the senses, we need not therefore refuse to regale ourselves with some brimming draughts from the well-stocked cellars of local history—history which in its variety, comprehensiveness, dramatic contrast, and tragedy, admits of few, if any, rivals.

The interest of the present is surely enhanced by its association with the past from which it derives its existence, more especially when, as in the present case, the associations are so unusually comprehensive as to touch nearly all the important civilizations known to history.

The Greeks, the Phœnicians, the Romans, the Goths, the Arabs, the Spaniards, the Turks, and the French have successively imposed their civilizations and left their influence on this country, the richness and fertility of which seem to have formed an irresistible bait to the greed of the whole world. There

is no other country—Italy not excepted—in which traces of the great Roman civilization are so conspicuous. They stretch inland up to the very edge of the desert, and it is hardly too much to say that there is not an Arab mosque, or house, or wall in which one does not find a column, a capital, or a corner-stone of Roman workmanship.

Carthage—the very name is a magician's wand, to conjure up before one's eyes a hundred dramatic scenes and incidents which have governed the subsequent history of the world. One may walk over the actual ground on which was enacted the awful tragedy of the Punic Wars, and see the famous ports which played such an important part in their history. Though Italy was the scene of the most wonderful achievements of the great Hannibal, yet here he was born and nurtured; and here, when a mere boy, he solemnly vowed that he would consecrate his life to destroying the power of Rome. How well he fulfilled his pledge! and how nearly he succeeded in realizing his daring ambition!

But of the manifold interests in which Tunisia abounds, not the least is her intimate association with the history of the early Church. If Palestine was the cradle of our faith, surely Tunisia was its nursery. It was here that, by the courage and fearlessness of her converts, who gloried in the privilege

of being permitted to die for their faith, the Christian Church first became a power.

It was here, at Carthage, that St. Cyprian encouraged and heartened his suffering flock with those beautiful epistles, many of which have happily been handed down to posterity, and it was here at the end of his saintly life, harassed as it had been by schisms within the Church, that he cheerfully suffered martyrdom. Later the great figure of St. Augustine appeared on the same stage.

In spite of internal squabbles, petty and undignified, the history of the early Church in North Africa is, in the main, as noble as it is pathetic, and is a glorious tribute to its altruism. On another page I have related the touching story of the martyrdoms of SS. Perpetua and Felicitas, with other incidents illustrative of the fervent faith of the early Christians in Tunisia.

In my sketches I have dealt more with the picturesque life of to-day in Arab towns and villages, than with the classical ruins of the past. Interesting as the latter are from the archæological and architectural point of view, they do not readily lend themselves to artistic treatment in composition or colour. Photography, moreover, can give us a tolerably accurate idea of architectural detail and proportion, but it can give no hint of the riot of colour which is the chief charm of Oriental streets

and bazaars; nor can it suggest the tender and delicate harmonies of tone and those soft shades of aerial perspective which, in the evening and early morning, make one wonder if that which seems to be before one's eyes is reality, or some wondrous mirage of an enchanted dreamland.

I am far from wishing to imply that I have succeeded in recording these elusive charms. Although my brush has had more practice than my pen, I am equally conscious of its limitations; but it has been my aim to catch something of the quick throb of Eastern life, something of its kaleidoscopic change of colour, something of the glare and glamour of noontide, and of the poetry of eventide.

"Qui s'excuse s'accuse"; and I fear I am dwelling overmuch on my neglect of Roman remains, but there is another sop for my conscience. Classic remains in Tunisia are not likely under the French occupation to come to further grief. No longer is the Arab peasant allowed to use a Roman amphitheatre or forum as a convenient quarry in which to find material for constructing his farm buildings and stables.

After 1,300 years of persistent pillage, it is indeed marvellous that so much should have endured. Not only are the ruins secured from further depredations, but careful excavations under competent direction are being systematically carried out, and yield,

CAFÉ DU KASBAH, TUNIS

Graham Petrie. R.I.

from time to time, a rich harvest of reward in the discovery of fresh and additional testimony to the magnificence of Roman civilization in North Africa.

The endurance of the picturesque side of Arab life is far less assured. It must be admitted that this picturesqueness is often associated with poverty and squalor, and in the view of the modern progressist squalor spells disease, and poverty entails mental stagnation.

The French do not hold Tunisia for the benefit of the Kodak-loving tourist. Though they have shown great tact and consideration in interfering as little as possible with the Arab quarters when planning and building their modern towns, yet the demands of commerce require, not infrequently, the erection of buildings which, from the æsthetic point of view, are an unforgivable outrage to their surroundings.

Native schools instil modern ideas into the minds of the growing generation, and the educated Arab is by no means a despiser of worldly prosperity and comfort. Still less so is his hated brother, the Tunisian Jew.

The emancipated Jew is keenly alive to the practical side of life, and quick to realize the advantage of associating himself with the governing French, rather than with the governed Arab. He is rapidly discarding the flowing burnous, the rich

gandoura of scarlet silk handsomely embroidered with green, the gorgeous orange-coloured waistcoat, in all of which he loved to display a higher standard of costliness than his rival the Arab. In the interest of personal advancement he is changing all this glory of Solomon, dear to his heart, and also to mine, in favour of the hideous attire of the twentieth-century European.

CHAPTER I

A Tale of Two Continents

At last the wearisome sound of grinding chains and cranks, the screechings of steam-whistles, the yells of porters, and the hundred and one unpleasant noises incidental to the loading of a vessel, came to an end, and we steamed quietly out of the harbour. I have certain artist friends who wax eloquent over the æsthetic charms of Marseilles, but I confess that I am blind to them. It may have been different in the good old times, but to-day the principal streets are a bewildering maze of electric trams; the harbour is fringed with hideous corrugated iron sheds, fifth-class grog shops and sordid cafés, and in spite of the fine vessels in the harbour, dust, dirt, squalor, and stench are to me its most conspicuous attributes. At any rate, I felt glad to leave it, and an expression of relief and satisfaction seemed to be written on the faces of most of my fellow-passengers, though to this the perfect weather may have largely contributed. We

started at noon. Lunch was immediately served, and for this first meal there was a goodly muster.

As I have already said, the weather was superb, and congratulations were in the air. Yet all that glitters is not gold. The steamers which carry you from Marseilles to Tunis or Algiers in thirty-four hours are built for speed, and not for level-headedness. I have been told by those who have crossed the Atlantic in the *Lusitania* and other gigantic liners of her class, that the absolute steadiness of these leviathans in a heavy sea is surprising. As you promenade the deck you say: "How calm!" You glance at the ocean, and, noting the behaviour of smaller craft, ejaculate: "How fearfully rough!"

These happy travellers should widen their experience by crossing the Mediterranean in a French steamer, and they will learn that she can hold her own in eccentricity of behaviour, disregard of the elements, and a magnificent contempt for the laws of cause and effect. "Roll! roll! roll!" is her song, and with a fearful persistency she conjugates the verb in every mood, and tense, and person. What though the sea resemble a sheet of glass? what though the air be stagnant in its stillness? It matters not! let us roll. 'Tis the song of the ship, "Roll! roll! roll!"

Half-way across one gets a good view of the

Corsican coast, but that was a poor consolation for sighting Tunis when it was too dark to distinguish any details. This was a great disappointment; but others have been more lucky, among them Monsieur Babelon, who in his book "Carthage" gives such a charming description of what he saw, or thought he saw, that I am tempted to avail myself of it, though my translation is so free that I refrain from using inverted commas.

From the bridge of the steamer an astonishing panorama presents itself. Under a sky of a purity unknown in our European climate, the coast, with its picturesque villas dotted here and there, displays a luxuriant vegetation; and when it is remembered that this was the ground of Dido and of Hannibal, admiration of Nature melts into classical memories, and draws forth a melancholy sigh. Farther away an isolated mound, crowned by some modern buildings of a monumental aspect, is visible. It is the ancient citadel of Byrsa, where so many historic dramas were enacted. Here King St. Louis died, and here the cathedral, built and dedicated to his memory by the late Cardinal Lavigerie, stands, close to the seminary of the White Fathers.

To the left, on the low sandy shore, is the little port of La Goulette, which guards the approach to the Lake of Tunis. The fort, which was taken by Charles V. from Barbarossa, serves to-day as barracks.

Here also are the arsenal and the Beylical prison, where St. Vincent de Paul dispensed his charity to the unhappy Christians whom the Corsair pirates had enslaved. On the other side of the Gulf of Tunis the blue sky is cut by the crests of a long chain of mountains, which were the background to some of those sanguinary battles between Carthage and Rome, and, later, between the Romans and the barbarians. Among the peaks we recognize Bou Kornein, the mountain with two horns; Djebel Ressas, rich in mines of lead and silver, behind which lie the ruins of Neferis; and, lastly, Zaghouan, the culminating point of all the Zeugitane, from whose generous springs Carthage drew her water 2,000 years ago, just as Tunis does to-day.

While we should have been revelling in poetic memories and the recognition of historic sites, we were actually discussing an excellent dinner as we were slowly tugged along the narrow canal which runs from La Goulette to Tunis. Many passengers whom we had not seen since the first lunch re-appeared, and with hearty appetites made up for lost meals. We all did ourselves remarkably well, and sauntered on deck to pay our respects to Tunis.

There she lay before us, her proportions clearly marked by twinkling lights, which grew fainter as they climbed up the hill surmounted by the Kasbah and the Beylical Palace ; while in the foreground

TUNIS FROM THE OLIVE WOODS

danced the reflections of many-coloured lights from the steamers in the harbour.

It was not the dress in which we would have asked her to receive our greetings. She hardly realized the description given by Diodorus of the White City. We should have liked better to doff our caps to her as she blushed under the first kisses of dawn, as she sparkled in the fierce noontide heat, or as she veiled herself in the soft draperies of twilight. But whatever her garb, there she lay—the Tunes of the Phœnicians, the Tunesium of the Romans, the Tunis of to-day. Far older than Carthage, she was for centuries overshadowed and eclipsed by the magnificence of her younger sister, and sank to the position of a poor relation, a country cousin—a mere suburb. But she has had her revenge. Not only has she outlived her neighbour, but she has incorporated her very bones, for there is hardly a column or a capital in Tunis which does not come from Carthage.

One must not expect on arriving at Tunis to plunge instantly into the scenes from the "Arabian Nights," as one does, for example, at Tangier, where, landing in a small rowing-boat, you are hoisted up to the pier to find yourself surrounded by a seething mass of wild, savage-looking Moors, who, screaming, yelling, and cursing, fight with each other as they endeavour to secure the luggage

which you relinquish with reluctance, doubting if you will ever see it again.

There is a faint echo of this excitement even at Tunis, but it is subdued and controlled by French officials, and there are rows of English-speaking omnibus porters, ready to soothe the anxiety and quiet the palpitations of nervous Britons.

CHAPTER II

Fragments of Tunisian History

Prior to the advent of the Phœnicians, we know little of the history of Tunisia. Numbers of dolmens exist which, according to experts, are precisely similar to those found in Brittany and England. One wonders at what remote period the primitive religion of sun-worship, with which these monoliths are believed to be connected, prevailed over such a large portion of the globe. It is a problem which will never be solved; but the reflection is not without its fascination that, at some time in the far-away past, the country with which this book is concerned and our own little island were peopled by those who practised similar religious rites, and were possibly of the same blood.

Sixteen hundred years before Christ the Canaanites were driven out of Palestine by Joshua, and it was the Canaanitish people who, under the Greek name of Phœnicians, settled in Tunisia, and eventually built the great city of Carthage, mistress of the

sea and wellnigh mistress of the world. The historian Procope relates that a monument of white stone was found in Numidia with the following inscription in the Phœnician language: "We are Canaanites driven from our country by the brigand Joshua, son of Kavé."

But long before the arrival of the Phœnicians, North Africa was freely populated by a race of whose origin and early history we know nothing, but which has endured and preserved many of its characteristics up to the present day. The Berber or Kabyle of to-day retains the Lybian language, with its distinctive alphabet, which he spoke more than 3,000 years ago when he was driven from the coast by the Phœnicians, and in spite of the domination of his country by successive civilizations, some of which were of a high order, he himself has never been completely conquered. In the fastnesses of the mountains to which he was driven he has always retained a considerable measure of independence, and once, for a short period, ruled the whole country.

But directly one begins to speculate as to the possible origin of the Berber, one is checkmated by the fact that his language is common to tribes of such entirely different type and race as the blond, industrious, mountain-loving Kabyle of Algeria and the fierce, warlike, dark-skinned Toureg of the

desert. The Kabyle might owe his descent to European stock; but the Toureg, he surely must have come from the south or from the east. The only trait which they seem to share in common is a passionate love of independence.

The late Monsieur Gaston Boissier tells us that inscriptions in this language have been discovered in the most remote parts of the Sahara, carved with the point of a dagger or written with tar or ochre. Examples have been found as far eastwards as Sinai, and westwards as the Canary Isles. With certain differences of vocabulary, it is still used on the banks of the Niger, and nearly as far as Senegal, and by tribes so different from each other that it is impossible to believe that they were ever of the same race. What makes the existence of, or the survival of, this language a still deeper puzzle is that, though it has existed for thousands of years, and out-lived Punic and Latin, it has never had any literature worthy of the name to aid its survival. Certainly North Africa is a land of mysteries.

The earliest cities of which we have any knowledge were Utica and Cambè. The latter is said to have been founded in 1259 B.C. by Cadmus and his wife Harmonie ; but, in spite of the lady's name, matrimonial discords arose, and the beautiful Harmonie, neglected and ill-treated by her husband, found life intolerable, and committed suicide. Her

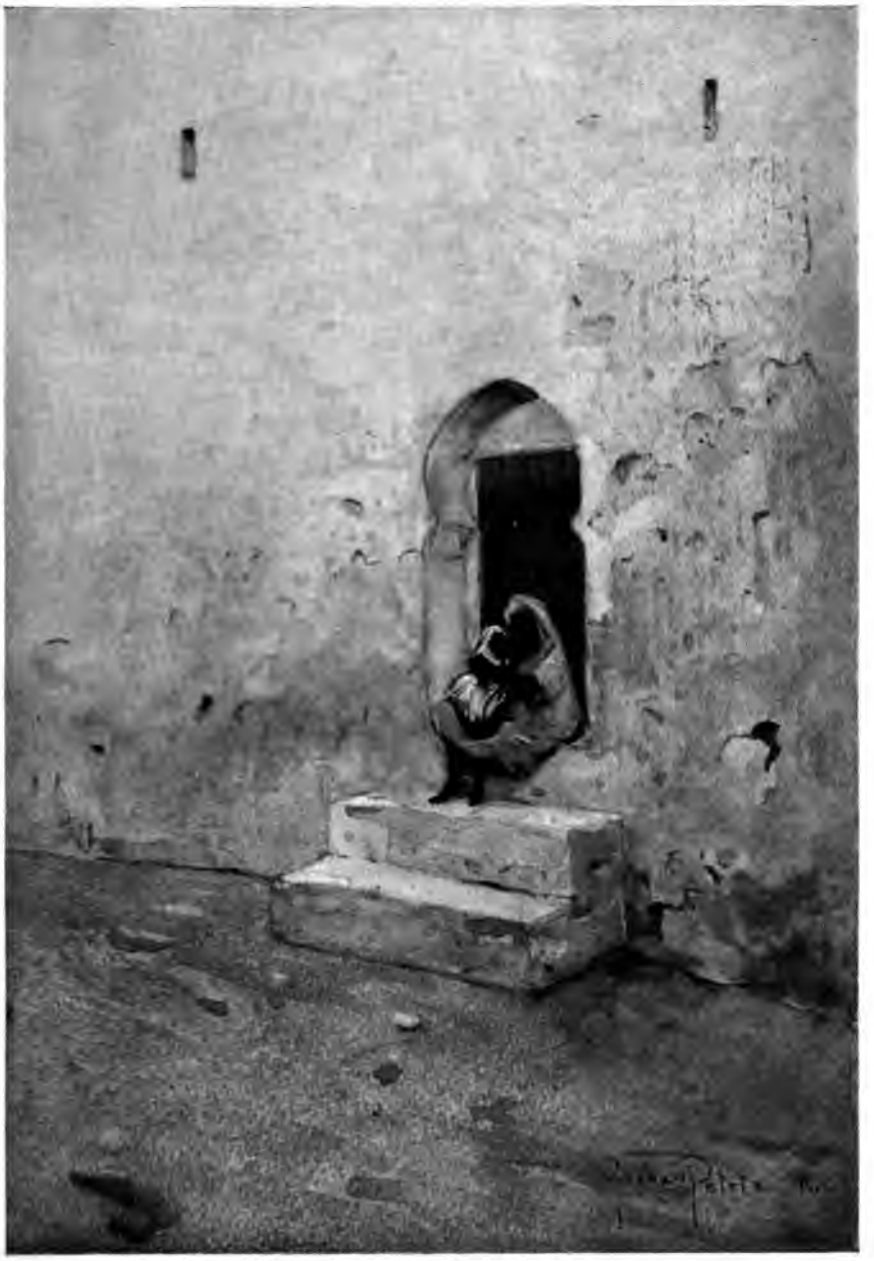
children and sympathizers carried her body to a spot far removed from her cruel spouse, and, erecting a magnificent tomb to her memory, settled themselves round it. This was the origin of the first city of Tunis.

But though we know that Utica, Cambè, and Tunis were important and flourishing towns long before the foundation of Carthage, and that they were rivals in trade, and constantly at war with each other, yet it is not till the arrival of the famous Queen Dido that the history of Tunisia becomes at all tangible.

The story of Dido is so well known that I almost hesitate to repeat it, and I do so, not with the idea of informing my reader, but out of respect to the memory of her late Majesty, and as a protest against a prevalent endeavour to cast a doubt on her reality, and to banish her into the shadowy realms of mythology.

Elissa, afterwards known as Dido, was the sister of Pygmalion, King of Tyre, and married Sychæus, high priest of Mercarth. Coveting the wealth of his brother-in-law, the King slew Sychæus at the altar, and for a time successfully concealed his crime. The faithful Elissa hoped against hope for her lord's return. At length, in the dead of night, his ghost appeared, and, revealing the hideous deed, bade her fly the country with the wealth which had

LOVE ON THE DOORSTEP



prompted the murder. She more than obeyed her instructions, and carried off not merely the treasure which had been her husband's, but also that of his assassin. She touched at Cyprus, and there obtained wives for her followers, inducing the priest of Baal to leave his temple and join her retinue.

Eventually they landed at Cambè, where they received a hearty welcome. Elissa, now known as Dido, meaning "the Fugitive," entered into negotiations with the Lybian King Iapon, from whom, for a nominal annual rent, she purchased as much land as she could cover with an ox-hide. Having made this bargain, she cut up the skin into the thinnest possible strips, and encircled with it the whole of the land afterwards known as Byrsa, the heart and citadel of Carthage.

Here it may perhaps be pointed out that those who so wickedly throw discredit on the story of Dido attribute its origin to a confusion of the Greek word "Byrsa," an oxhide, and the Phœnician word "Bozra," a fortress.

Dido, having vowed eternal fidelity to the memory of her husband, devoted herself to the government of her city with great success, till Æneas was shipwrecked on her shores and craved her hospitality. This she royally extended, and at once conceived a strong admiration for the heroic character of her guest. These feelings soon

A CORNER IN THE RUE BELAT, TUNIS

deepened into those of passionate love, and, after a prolonged struggle with her conscience, which bade her be true to her vows, she succumbed to love, and openly declared her passion. Æneas was for a time responsive to her tender emotions; but it was revealed to him that his duty called him to Italy, and he somewhat cruelly deserted the Queen, who, distracted with grief and shame, committed suicide.

Such, briefly, is Virgil's story; but for those whose digestion is weakly, and who cannot swallow the anachronism that Dido arrived in Africa in 937 B.C., nearly 300 years after the age of Æneas, there is another legend.

The surpassing beauty and wisdom of Dido won for her many admirers, among whom was Jarbas, King of Mauritania, a very powerful monarch, who sent proposals of marriage to the Queen, accompanied by a threat that if his wishes were not complied with he would wage war on the Carthaginians. Dido, remembering her vows, yet wishing to save her people from possible destruction, begged for three months' delay before giving a decisive answer. During that time she erected a funeral pile under the pretence that she wished, by a solemn sacrifice, to appease the spirit of her husband Sychæus. When it was lighted, and the conflagration was at its height, she stabbed herself in the breast and

threw herself into the flames in the presence of her subjects.

Carping sceptics have venomously suggested that the story of the bargain struck between the great foundress of Carthage and King Iapon has a certain metaphorical truth in being a characteristic illustration of the crafty cunning which marked the dealings of the Carthaginians, with friends and foes alike, throughout their history, an example of their traditional slimness inherited from Canaanitish forebears.

During the six centuries which elapsed between the foundation of Carthage by Dido and the commencement of the Punic Wars, there are few records, and none from the Carthaginians themselves. The library which would doubtless have given a detailed history of their development from such small beginnings was contemptuously handed over by the Romans to a Numidian chief, who had served as their ally, and though there are records that it existed 100 years later, it was eventually altogether lost and destroyed. The account which Hannon wrote of his venturesome voyage beyond the Columns of Hercules (Gibraltar), and far down the African coast, had been translated by a Greek, and has so been handed down to us. We also know that a comprehensive treatise on the science of agriculture, in twenty-four volumes, was so highly thought of by the Romans that it was translated

into Latin, and regarded as the standard work on the subject. These two books are all that survive of what was doubtless a great library.

The instincts of the Carthaginians were primarily commercial, and, had it been possible, they would probably have been contented, as were their ancestors the Phœnicians, to possess numerous small colonies on the shores of other countries, at points convenient for the prosecution of their sea trade; but they were gradually forced, as we ourselves have been, to annex additional territory in order to protect that which they already possessed. Their strength, like our own, lay in their naval supremacy; their weakness in their dependance for their army on mercenaries, collected from all nations, whom they did not treat too liberally or even justly, and who consequently betrayed them whenever the temptation to do so was sufficiently strong.

The security of Carthage from attack by enemies was enormously augmented by her geographical position. The peninsula on which she stood was joined to the mainland by a neck far narrower than that of to-day, the sea having made considerable encroachments at this point. Across this neck there stretched a great wall which, Appian tells us, was 7 feet thick, 45 feet high, and flanked throughout its length by towers at equal distances of 200 feet. This was the outer wall; but behind it were two

A CORNER IN THE RUE BELAT, TUNIS

Graham Petrie.

similar walls, and the intervening spaces were arranged to give stabling accommodation for 300 elephants, with their vast stores of food, 4,000 horses, and barracks for their riders as well as for 20,000 infantry. This great engineering feat, so effective that it successfully withstood the battering-rams of Censoinus, secured for Carthage a safety from attack by land almost as complete as that enjoyed by islanders.

It is from the historians who lived during the life and death struggles of the Punic Wars that we owe our information about the Carthaginians. Of that death struggle we have full details, but of the centuries of prosperity which preceded annihilation we have the meagrest records.

When I come to the subject of the Punic Wars I am conscious of some embarrassment, for they have been written of so fully, so frequently, and sometimes so eloquently, that it may seem almost superfluous to allude to them. Doubtless among my readers there will be many who know that tragic history, with all its lurid details, as intimately as they do their Bible, their Prayer-book, or their Shakespeare; yet there may be others whose classical reading has become rusty, and who, lacking time and opportunity to polish it from original sources, may be glad to have recalled to mind a few of the many dramatic incidents which happened on Tunisian soil or in Tunisian waters during the long

struggle for supremacy between Rome and Carthage.

It was on the blue waters between Tunis and Sicily that in 262 B.C. the Romans first attempted to contest the dominion of the sea by the Carthaginians. Finding that they were unable to compete with the superior knowledge of navigation possessed by their enemy, or to construct ships of equal mobility, they invented a sort of grappling-iron and drawbridge combined, the bridge being furnished with parapets. This contrivance worked on a hinge 12 feet above the level of the deck, and could be swung round in any direction. When the Carthaginians rammed their ships the drawbridge, which was 24 feet long beyond the hinge, was lowered from its vertical position; the iron beak and talons buried themselves into the deck of the enemies' vessel, and the Romans were able to board her, two abreast, and so change the conflict into a hand-to-hand fight in which they knew themselves to be superior. From the resemblance of the iron beak to the bill of a raven, this invention was called a Corvus. The Carthaginians, who had a great contempt for the Roman fleet, laughed and jeered at the sight of these strange-looking prows; but they soon learnt their use, and found themselves being cut to pieces by their despised foe. They lost eighty vessels, and the carnage was horrible.

FRAGMENTS OF TUNISIAN HISTORY

Half an hour by rail from Tunis, on the line which runs to Sousse, there is a sleepy little station called Maxula - Radés. Maxula was the name of a Phœnician city which sparkled in the sun more than 2,000 years ago, on the spot where a little French bathing resort, which has taken to itself the ancient name, now disports itself. Radés is the name of the Arab village on the slopes of the hill above. It nestles among the olive-trees so peacefully, and its surroundings are so idyllic, that to associate it with the horrors of war seems a strange incongruity. Yet it was here that in 256 B.C. Regulus landed, and disposed his troops, before successfully besieging Tunis. In his preliminary battles he was so successful that the Carthaginians sued for peace; but the terms demanded were so hard that they determined to fight once more, and under the able generalship of the Greek mercenary, Zanthippus, did so with awful success. Xanthippus engaged his foe in battle near Tunis with a force which included 100 elephants, and to his effective use of these animals his victory was largely due. Though the Romans were the bravest of soldiers, they felt themselves to be powerless against these huge beasts, which, Flaubert says, had scythes fastened to their tusks, and, as they charged the enemy, first cut them in pieces, and then trampled them to death. Of the army of 20,000 Romans

only 2,000 escaped, and Regulus himself, with 500 men, was taken prisoner.

After an imprisonment of several years he was sent to Rome to effect an exchange of prisoners, he giving his word of honour that, should the mission be unsuccessful, he would return to Carthage.

Horace has related the terms in which he spoke to the Roman Senate: "Let those who have surrendered when they ought to have died, die in the land which has witnessed their disgrace. Let not the Senate establish a precedent fraught with disaster to ages yet unborn, or buy with their gold what should only be bought back by arms." And then he pointed out that he was old, and, in the short time of life that still remained to him, could be of little service to his country, while, on the other hand, the Generals who would be exchanged for him were still hale and vigorous. When he saw the Senate wavering between pity for him and their sense of duty to their country, he pretended that he had taken a slow poison which was already coursing through his veins; and finally he strode away, with his eyes fixed upon the ground, lest he should see his sorrowing wife and children, but with a step as light, and a heart as free, as if he were going for a holiday to his country estate."*

* Bosworth Smith.

MAXULA-RADÉS, where Regulus landed in 256 B.C.

He did not know, nor could his Senate have imagined, the horrible fate which was in store for him. The Carthaginians, furious at the failure of the mission, put him in a box studded with sharp nails, so that he could get no rest by day or night, and then, having previously cut off his eyelids, suddenly brought him out of his dark dungeon and exposed his agonized eyes to the full glare of the sun. Finally they crucified him.

Cruelty was not the monopoly of the Carthaginians, as is shown by the sequel to this dreadful history. The widow of Regulus ordered her sons to shut up, in a cask of the smallest possible dimensions, two Carthaginian captives, Bostar and Hamilcar. For five days and nights she kept them there, without food or water, till Bostar, more happy than his companion, died. For five days longer Hamilcar was confined with his dead companion, receiving just enough food to keep him alive, till the servants, full of pity for his sufferings, appealed to the Tribune, who ordered his release.

When the first Punic War was ended, the Carthaginians were anxious to get rid of their mercenary soldiers, but the latter naturally refused to disband till they had been paid for their services. The Senate proposed to pay each man a single gold coin, as a first instalment of its debt, on condition

that the army retired to Sicca. This arrangement was carried out, but no sooner had the army retired from its embarrassing proximity, than the Carthaginians sent Hannon to propose a reduction on the amount due, pleading the depleted condition of the State's coffers. In making this suggestion they counted on the popularity of Hannon with the men, which was considerable; nevertheless, the word "reduction" was received with howls of anger from the whole army, which promptly marched on Carthage, encamping at Tunis.

The Carthaginians were terrified, promised to pay everything, and daily sent presents of food and luxuries to the camp. This conduct emboldened the mercenaries, who made further demands, such as the compensation for their dead horses. The Senate, thoroughly frightened, sent a General named Giscon with chests of gold with which to satisfy all demands, but it was too late. Under the influence of two men, Spendius and Matho, the mercenaries had become conscious of their power.

Spendius was a runaway Greek slave; Matho was a Numidian chief, who had great influence and authority over his people. The chests of gold were appropriated, but the unfortunate Giscon was chained and imprisoned. Messengers were sent throughout the country urging the Berbers to join in what was described as a war of liberty. Not

only did the call to arms meet with such enthusiastic response that the army soon reached the number of 70,000 men, but thousands of women voluntarily contributed their jewellery and the trinkets of their children to swell the war chests.

The army was divided into two portions, half of it remaining at Tunis under Matho, the other half, under Spendius, encamped at some spot between Hamam-Lif and the plains of Kairouan. Sufficiently confident in his increased strength to risk enraging the Carthaginians, Spendius now mutilated Giscon and his 700 soldiers, and threw them into a ditch to die, informing his enemy that this was the way in which all prisoners who fell into his hands would be treated.

In this hour of terrible danger Carthage was saved from extermination by the genius of Hamilcar Barca, who, encamping on the slopes of Bou-Kornein, drew the enemy into a disadvantageous position, and effected a blockade. He cut off all their supplies till, in the agonies of starvation, they were reduced to the horrible expedient of eating their own slaves. When there were no more slaves to eat, and they found themselves looking at each other with hungry eyes, a deputation, headed by Spendius, sued for peace. Hamilcar demanded that ten of the mercenaries, to be named by himself, should be given up, the rest of the army being

allowed to disband, unarmed, and with one garment each. These terms having been agreed to, ten chiefs were chosen, including Spendius, and crucified outside the walls of Tunis, in sight of Matho and his army—a salute which was acknowledged soon afterwards by the crucifixion, on the same spot, of a Carthaginian General and fifty soldiers.

Some months later Matho's army was completely defeated, the rebel chief being captured alive, and put to death with horrible tortures at Carthage. The war had lasted for three years and four months; and of it, Polybius, whose life was largely spent in recording horrors, says that it was by far the most cruel and inhuman of which he had ever heard.

If, in the searching sunlight of the day, the hills and plains of Tunisia recall numberless dramatic episodes, her classic ground is hardly less suggestive when veiled in the mystery of night. One hot, sultry evening I strolled in search of fresher air up through the old Arab town and on to the ramparts, which have often protected it from the attack of enemies. Below me lay a plain which merged into the dark sea, and far across the water I knew that Sicily lay. Could we but search the bed of that treacherous sea we should doubtless find far more Punic relics than are ever likely to be discovered by the industrious White Fathers on the

hill of Byrsa. The fleets of the Carthaginians and the Romans — more especially the latter — were not too well able to weather the sudden storms, which then, as now, sprang up with little warning. At the seige of Libæum alone 800 Roman vessels laden with provisions were wrecked in a single night by a violent tempest, and Polybius says that "they were broken into fragments, so that not a plank remained which could be used again, and all along the coast the hungry foam was discoloured with the corn intended for the famishing Roman army."

A bonfire which suddenly burst into flames brought to mind the fact that the Carthaginians had an elaborate code of bonfire signals, by means of which they gave important information to their fleet in time of war; but it also recalled a tragic nocturnal conflagration which took place more than 2,000 years ago not very far from the spot where I was standing.

Scipio, with his Roman army, was encamped on the hills near Tunis, and within sight were the camps of the Carthaginians and their allies the Numidians. Scipio, aware that his army was much smaller than that of the enemy, felt that his only chance of success lay in making a surprise attack by night. He had noticed that the huts of the Carthaginians were constructed of dry wood, while

those of the Numidians were made of wattled reeds, thatched with straw, and this observation suggested a plan of attack which he carried out with terrible success. In order to obtain fuller knowledge of the ins and outs of the enemy's camps, he pretended to enter into negotiations, and instructed his messengers to note every detail of their arrangements. Appian thus relates what happened :

"At the third watch the trumpet sounded lightly. Then Scipio's army marched in profound silence to the enemy's camp and surrounded it. With shouts, mingled with the discordant blasts of trumpets, they struck terror into the hearts of the enemy, swept away the guards from their outposts, and set the huts on fire. The Africans started from their sleep in consternation, and fumbled for their arms. Bewildered and confused, they tried to get into order of battle, but the noise was so great that they could not hear the commands of their officers, and the General himself did not understand in the darkness what was happening. Thinking that the camp was taken, they fled from the fire of the burning huts down to the plain, where the Roman horse, who were in readiness, fell upon them and slaughtered them.

"Thus by one act of daring, and in a little part of a night, did the Romans demolish two camps

A VENERABLE TREE, MAXULA RADÉS

and two armies much greater than their own. The Romans lost about 100 men, the enemy a little less than 30,000, besides 2,400 prisoners. Moreover, 600 horse surrendered themselves to Scipio on his return. Some of the elephants were killed and some wounded. Scipio, having gained a great store of arms, gold, silver, ivory, and horses, Numidian and other, and having prostrated the Carthaginians by one splendid victory, distributed prizes to the army, and sent the richest of the spoils to Rome."

Behind me in the Arab town a wedding procession was marching through the streets, to the inevitable accompaniment of wild barbaric music. With the shouts of the revellers and the discordant din of their drums and pipes in my ears, it was not difficult to fancy that the leaping flames of the distant bonfire proceeded from the first of the wattled Numidian huts fired by Scipio's army.

There was much about the character of the Carthaginians which it is impossible to admire. They were mean, treacherous, and cruel; they endeavoured to evade their obligations to their allies and their mercenaries; they broke their contracts and treaties; they tortured their prisoners of war with ghastly inhumanity; and, capricious in the treatment of their own leaders, they were shamefully disloyal to those dauntless heroes Hamil-

car Barca and Hannibal. Had they only given to Hannibal, that greatest General of all time, the support for which he asked, and which he had surely earned the right to demand, there can be little doubt that they would have conquered Rome, and for a time, at any rate, been masters of the world. But adversity would seem to have developed all their nobler qualities, and the courage and bravery, the resource and ingenuity, the determination and perseverance, displayed during their last fight for life, enlists all our sympathy and commands all our admiration.

The last scene in the long drama of the Punic Wars, which had lasted for 125 years, was enacted in 146 B.C. It will be remembered that the Carthaginians had already given up to the Romans all their elephants, their ships, their catapults, their arms, and 300 hostages drawn from the noblest families, on the understanding that their territory, sacred rites, tombs, liberty, and possessions were to be preserved to them. When the Romans had taken away, as they thought, all powers of resistance—when they had drawn, as they believed, the Carthaginians' teeth—then a fresh decree was announced, which stated that Carthage must be destroyed, but that the citizens might build a new city in any part of their territory they pleased, provided only it was ten miles from the coast. The Carthaginians, horrified at

this betrayal, begged that they might be allowed to send an embassy to Rome, but even this privilege was denied them. "Then," says Appian, "followed a scene of indescribable fury and madness such as the Mænads are said to enact in the Bacchic mysteries. Some fell upon those senators who had advised giving the hostages and tore them to pieces, considering them the ones who had led them into the trap. Others treated in a similar way those who had favoured giving up the arms. Some stoned the ambassadors for bringing the bad news, and others dragged them through the city. The city was full of wailing and wrath, of fear and threatenings. People roamed the street invoking whatever was most dear to them, and took refuge in the temples as in asylums. They upbraided their gods for not being able to defend themselves. Some went into the arsenals, and wept when they found them empty. Others ran to the dockyard, and bewailed the ships that had been surrendered to perfidious men. Some called their elephants by name, as if they had been present, and reviled their own ancestors and themselves for not perishing, sword in hand, with their country, instead of paying tribute and giving up their elephants, their ships, and their arms. Wildest of all was the anger kindled in the mothers of the hostages, who, like furies in a tragedy, accosted those whom they met

with shrieks, and accused them of giving away their children against their protest; or mocked at them, saying that the gods were now taking vengeance on them for the lost children. A few kept their wits about them, closed the gates, and brought stones upon the walls to take the place of the lost catapults.

"They also sent to the consuls again, asking a truce of thirty days, in order to send an embassy to Rome. When this was refused a second time, a wonderful change and determination came over them—to endure everything rather than abandon their city. Quickly all minds were filled with courage from this transformation. All the sacred places, the temples, and every other unoccupied space, were turned into workshops, where men and women worked together day and night without pause, taking their food by turns by a fixed schedule. Each day they made 100 shields, 300 swords, 1,000 missiles for catapults, 500 darts and javelins, and as many catapults as they could; for string to bend them the women cut off their hair for want of other fibres."

The energy, courage, and perseverance of the Carthaginians in their last desperate fight for existance has, perhaps, no parallel in history. For two years they kept their foe at bay. On one occasion, observing that the wind blew towards the Roman ships, they filled some small boats with twigs

and tow, poured brimstone and pitch over the contents, and then, spreading the sails, they set fire to the boats, which the wind carried to the Roman ships, nearly destroying the whole fleet. They made sallies by night, they built new triremes and quinqueremes out of old material, and when Scipio thought that, by his famous mole, he had completely imprisoned them, they excavated a new outlet at a point where, owing to the depth of water, the mole had not been carried. Everyone helped in this work, even the women and children; and it was carried out with such absolute secrecy that when their new ships emerged from the opening the Romans were utterly astonished and bewildered. Indeed, they were so confused and demoralized that Appian believes that had the Carthaginians only attacked them there and then, instead of delaying for three days—by which time the Romans were prepared to meet them—they might have won a decisive victory. Alas! instead of striking when the iron was hot, instead of taking their tide at its flow, they contented themselves with making an empty and pompous demonstration, and returned, amid the cheers of their compatriots. When later they engaged the enemy's fleet, though there was great loss of life and ships on both sides, neither force won a decisive victory. To the heroic scene when they swam out in the dead of night and set

fire to the enemy's battering-rams, I have alluded on another page. It is related that on the morning which followed that memorable night the paved footway was so slippery with coagulated blood that it was impossible to walk on it.

Three years later, after many futile efforts, Scipio successfully stormed the commercial harbour, and entering, passed into the "cothon," or military port, and the forum which adjoined it. The Carthaginian guards, weak with hunger and disease, fought bravely, but were incapable of offering any effective resistance. The Romans passed the night in the forum, and in the morning were reinforced by 4,000 fresh troops. The assault of the city was then commenced. Three streets ascended from the forum to the fortress of Byrsa, with houses six stories high, from the roof-tops of which stones and other missiles were hurled at the soldiers below. These houses were taken one by one with hand-to-hand fighting on the terraced roofs. When the defenders of a house had all been dispatched, planks were thrown across to the next, and the struggle recommenced. "While war was raging in this way on the roofs, another fight was going on among those who met each other in the streets below. The air was filled with groans, shrieks, sobs, and every cry of agony. Men and women were hurled alive from the roofs to the pavement, some of them alighting

FROM THE STEPS OF THE GRAND MOSQUE ZITOUANA,
TUNIS

on the heads of spears, swords, and other pointed weapons. It was not expedient to set fire to the houses, on account of those who were still on the roofs, until Scipio reached Byrsa, when he set fire to the three streets all together, and gave orders to keep the passages clear of burning material, so that the army might move freely backwards and forwards.

"Now fresh scenes of horror were added. As the fire spread and carried everything before it, the soldiers did not wait to destroy the buildings little by little, but demolished them simultaneously. And so, as the fire devoured the city, the display of suffering became more and more gruesome. In the dark corners of buildings which came crashing to the ground, old men, women, and children had hidden themselves, and now, burnt and mutilated, they uttered piteous cries. Others, hurled from a height with stones and burning timbers, were torn asunder, and fell in grotesque shapes, crushed and mangled. Nor was this the end of their miseries, for the street-cleaners, who were removing the rubbish with axes, mattocks, and forks, tossed, with these instruments, the dead and the living together into holes in the ground. The street-cleaners did not do these things with cruel intent; but the tug-of-war, the glory of approaching victory, the rush of the soldiers, the orders of the officers, the blast of the trumpets, tribunes and centurions marching their cohorts hither

and thither—all together made everybody frantic, and heedless of the spectacle under their eyes." For six days and nights the fight continued. Scipio was indefatigable; his soldiers worked in relays, but he gave himself no rest. He was here, there, and everywhere, directing and superintending everything, encouraging his men with words, and setting them an example with his hands, only snatching now and again a mouthful of food while giving his orders.

On the seventh day, while seated on a "high place," noting what had been achieved and what remained to be done, a deputation, bearing olive-branches and the sacred garlands of Æsculapius, approached, begging that he would spare the lives of those who were willing to quit the Byrsa. To this he consented, making an exception of the deserters from his army, of whom there were about 900. And forthwith 50,000 men and women came out from the gates of the citadel.

There now remained only Hasdrubal and his wife with their two boys, and the deserters, who all withdrew to the temple of Æsculapius. That temple, the most beautiful and celebrated in Carthage, was situated on the spot where the chapel of St. Louis now stands. It was approached from the public square by a superb staircase of sixty marble steps, the destruction of which, easily affected, rendered the temple impregnable.

And now comes the one blot which sullies the fair pages of this final chapter of Carthaginian history—a chapter which chronicles in every line the indomitable courage of a great nation in its fight with inexorable fate. The cowardly Hasdrubal, who had murdered his predecessor, and, it is said, feasted and revelled while his soldiers starved, secretly deserted his wife and children, and, presenting himself before Scipio with an olive-branch in his hand, begged for his own life. The request was contemptuously granted; but making him sit at his feet, the Roman General called to those who had been deserted to look at their betrayer. Cursing and reproaching him, the miserable victims hastened their inevitable end by setting fire to the temple. Then Hasdrubal's wife appeared, arrayed in her costliest robes with her children by her side. Standing calmly and majestically while the lurid flames danced in cruel sport behind her, she called to Scipio, and thus addressed him: "For you, Romans, the gods have no cause for indignation, since you exercise the right of war; but upon this Hasdrubal, betrayer of his country and her temples, of me and of his children, may the Carthaginian gods take vengeance and use you as their instrument." Then, turning to Hasdrubal, she added: "Coward, traitor, and most unmanly of men, this fire will entomb me and my children. Will you,

the leader of great Carthage, decorate a Roman triumph? Ah! what punishment do you merit from him at whose feet you are now sitting?" She then slew her children, threw them into the flames, and leaped in after them.

"Scipio, beholding this city, which had flourished 700 years from its foundation, and had ruled over so many lands, islands, and seas, rich with arms and fleets, elephants and money, equal to the mightiest monarchies, but far surpassing them in bravery and spirit (since without ships or arms, and in the face of famine, it had sustained continuous war for three years), now come to its end in total destruction—Scipio, beholding this spectacle, shed tears and publicly lamented the fortune of the enemy. After meditating by himself a long time, and reflecting on the rise and fall of cities, nations, and empires, as well as of individuals; upon the fate of Troy, that once proud city; upon that of the Assyrians, the Medes, and the Persians; greatest of all, and later, the splendid Macedonian empire, either voluntarily or otherwise the words of the poet escaped his lips:

> "'The day shall come in which our sacred Troy
> And Priam, and the people over whom
> Spear-bearing Priam rules, shall perish all.'"*

* "Iliad," vi. 448, 449, Bryant's translation.

CHAPTER III

Fragments of Tunisian History (*continued*)

When the Romans heard the news that Carthage had been destroyed they were delirious with joy. At last they were freed from the terror of Carthaginian supremacy which had haunted them for years. "No other wars," says Appian, "had so frightened them at their own gates as the Punic Wars, which ever brought peril to them by reason of the perseverance, skill, and courage, as well as the bad faith, of those enemies. They recalled what they had suffered from the Carthaginians in Sicily, in Spain, and in Italy itself for sixteen years, during which Hannibal destroyed 400 towns and killed 300,000 of their men in battle alone. Remembering these things, they were so excited over this victory that they could hardly believe it, and they asked each other over and over again whether it was really true that Carthage was destroyed. They decreed that if anything was left of Carthage, Scipio should obliterate it, and that nobody should

be allowed to live there. Direful threats were levelled against any who should disobey."

But though the ground was cursed, its natural and unrivalled advantages as a site for a great city remained. Twenty-five years later, Rome, under the tribunate of Gaius Gracchus, found herself over-populated, and sent 6,000 colonists to build a new Carthage; but the curse was still sufficiently recent to exercise its spell, and when the boundaries of the new city had been laid out, they were immediately obliterated by real or phantom wolves, and the Senate put a stop to the project. Some eighty years later Cæsar, on his return from Egypt, was encamped near Carthage, and his perception and appreciation of the great natural advantages of the site were followed by a most opportune dream, in which it was revealed to him by the picture of a weeping army that Carthage must be rebuilt. He was assassinated shortly afterwards, but his son Augustus, finding the memorandum of his father's dream and resolve, sent colonists from Rome and rebuilt the city.

The new Carthage grew apace, and soon promised to emulate her predecessor's importance among the great cities of the world. On the ruins of the temple of Æsculapius, where the wife of the cowardly Hasdrubal had cremated herself and her children, rose the magnificent palace of the Roman

RUE SIDI-BEN-ZIAD. TUNIS

Proconsol. It was supported by all the other monumental public buildings of Roman culture—the forum, theatre and amphitheatre, the circus, public baths, and numerous temples. Commercial relations were re-established with Greece and the East, and Carthage became again one of the great emporiums of the world's treasure, as is convincingly proved by the statuary, mosaics, pottery, and jewellery now displayed in the Bardo Museum at Tunis.

The Romans naturally brought with them their own gods; but, always fond of adopting new ones, it would seem that some of them accepted the Carthaginian deities, including the horrible Baal Moloch, for on the summit of Bou Cornein, his two-horned mountain, there has been discovered a Punic cemetery, on the burial-stones of which many Roman names appear, mingled with those of Berber and other origin.

In Carthage during the first and second century there were disciples of many pagan religions, and numerous Jews, but of Christians we hear nothing till the end of the second century. "An impenetrable obscurity," says Monsieur Alcais, "enveloped the origin and progress of Christianity till the end of the second century. Strange phenomenon! Elsewhere one finds Christianity side by side with paganism, winning its way in the midst of foreign wars and home quarrels, conspicuous under the

swift stroke of the axe-man or amidst the shouts and clamours of the amphitheatre. Not so in Africa. During the whole of the second century one sees again and again the various aspects of pagan genius, many expressions of its life, and all the creations of its thought ; but never is the presence of the new ideal alluded to. Suddenly, as by the raising of a curtain, the Christian Church of Africa appears in the fulness of its power, with its discipline, its rites and ceremonies, its cemeteries, and its numerous faithful worshipping together all over the country. We are obliged to conclude that its first appearance was relatively remote, otherwise it is inexplicable that Tertullus, converted in 190, should not allude to the introduction of the Gospel into Africa."

The contrast between the vanities and gaiety of the fashionable pagan world, as presented in the works of Apulius, and also by Tertullus and St. Cyprian, present a startling contrast to the austere habits enjoined on Christians at this time. The great majority of St. Cyprian's flock seem to have accepted the restrictions imposed on them without a murmur; but there were some who tried to combine a regard for the safety of their souls with the enjoyment of some of the more harmless vanities of life. They denied that worldly pleasures were forbidden in the pages of Scripture, and among

other passages they quoted the one in which it is related that David danced before the ark. But their pastors would have none of it. All such pleasures as dancing, theatre-going, gambling, fine dressing, and the wearing of jewellery and other personal adornments were violently denounced as pertaining to the devil. Both Tertullian and St. Cyprian denounced personal adornment with unrestrained violence of language, and their arguments strike one as being more quaint than logical. The conceits of hair-dressing seem to have aroused the especial wrath of Tertullian.

" What is the use," he asks, " of giving yourselves so much trouble in arranging your locks ? Do you think that it is of importance to your health ? Let them alone. Sometimes you bind them up, sometimes you let them float; sometimes you pile them up, sometimes you crush them together.

" One loves to buckle them with brooches, another to let them fly about in an affectation of negligence; but worst of all are those who dye them artificially. There are those who make their hair the colour of saffron, as if ashamed of their race. They would like, apparently, to have been born in Germany or Gaul, and change their hair in consequence. It is foolish to believe that that which is dirty is beautiful; and, moreover, the use of these dyes is sure, little by little, to destroy your hair. You place on your

heads I do not know what enormous masses of hair—a series of wigs which surmount your head in the shape of a casque or lid, and at other times are brought down and piled up on your necks. If you can blush under these masses of false hair, blush for the lack of cleanliness. Do not wear the remains of another—of one who was, perhaps, immodest, who may have been culpable, and destined for hell—and place it on the holy head of a Christian."

St. Cyprian writes in much the same strain. "It is not the work of God," he cries, "that sheep should be scarlet or purple, nor is it His teaching to dye and colour wool with the juice of herbs and with shellfish. Nor fashioned He necklaces of stones and pearls, inlaid with gold, and arranged in chains and groups wherewith to hide the neck. Is it God's will," he asks, "that the ears should be pierced, thereby causing pain to innocent infancy, ignorant of the world's evil, in order that, in time to come, precious beads, ponderous in their cost and weight, may hang from these scarred and mutilated ears? Your complexions are polluted with false colourings; your hair you have altered with unnatural dyes; your countenance is captured with a lie; your natural appearance is lost; your look is not your own. Wound not your ears, circle not your neck with precious chains, fetter not your ankles with golden bonds, stain not your hair, and

RUE HALOUFAINE, TUNIS

keep your eyes worthy of seeing God. Those glaring painted eyes are copied from the serpent. Imitate him now and you will burn with him hereafter."

History repeats itself. One might almost fancy oneself seated amid a fashionable congregation in Westminster, listening to the diatribes of a certain twentieth-century Father.

Those who strayed seriously from the narrow path had a bad time under this strict disciplinarian. The sinner was excommunicated, but, if truly repentant, was received back into the fold on public confession. After fasting and enduring other forms of penance, he was clad in a hair-shirt and covered with ashes till his appearance was lugubrious and terrifying. He then prostrated himself before everyone, before the people and before the priests, entreating pardon and forgiveness. He seized the hem of the priests' vestments, kissed the imprints of their footsteps, embraced them by the knees, and implored all those present to pity his lamentable condition.

For the Christians who carried out all the devout practices enjoined on them, there could, indeed, have been little time for worldly vanities. Prayers were said five times during the day. Wednesday and Friday were both fast days, when it was forbidden to eat until three o'clock in the afternoon. Sunday, it is true, was regarded as a day of joy, on which

it would have been impious to fast, or even to kneel in prayer; but the day was very fully occupied with other religious distractions. A public service was held at an early hour, at which psalms and hymns were sung, the Scriptures were expounded, a sermon preached, followed by a communion service, each head of the family taking away with him a small portion of the consecrated bread, to be used for celebration during the ensuing week-days. At the end of the service the company embraced one another with the holy kiss of peace. Later in the day came the Agape, or Love Feast, at which rich and poor sat down, on equal terms, to a simple but substantial supper. These feasts, sometimes held at the tombs of the martyrs, were a special cause of offence to pagan persecutors, who spread about unfounded reports that the Christians drank human blood and committed various immoralities. They were finally suppressed by St. Augustine.

TRIAL OF SPERATUS

In 177, Marcus Aurelius prohibited throughout the empire the introduction of new cults, and also ordered that all professing Christians should be put to death. There is an authentic record of the trial of six Christians in the tribunal of Carthage, shortly after the promulgation of this edict. Their names

were Cittinus, Nartzalus, Speratus, men; and Donata, Vestia, and Secunda, women. Speratus acted as spokesman for the group.

The Proconsul took his seat, and, according to Roman usage, stated in a few forcible words the case against the accused, and at the same time exhorted them, not without kindness, to respect the law, to obey the Emperor, and to renounce Christianity.

SPERATUS. We have neither said nor done anything wrong; when we have been ill-treated we have returned thanks, and have paid no disrespect to your Emperor.

PROCONSUL. We also have our religion, and it is simple. We swear by the gods of our Emperor, and we pray for his health; it is your duty to do so also.

SPERATUS. If you will listen patiently, I will explain the mystery of our religion.

PROCONSUL. I cannot listen to you; you attack our religion. Swear by the gods of our Emperor!

SPERATUS. I know nothing of the kingdoms of this world. I serve a God who is invisible to the eyes of men. I have committed no sin, and I have always paid the tax on everything I have bought; but I worship my Saviour, the King of kings, the Emperor of all nations.

PROCONSUL. What have you in that box?

SPERATUS. The books of the Evangelists according to our custom; and also the epistles of Paul, a just man.

PROCONSUL. Abandon this creed!

SPERATUS. A bad faith is to commit murder and to bear false witness.

PROCONSUL (*turning to the others*). Do not associate yourselves with this folly!

CITTINUS. We fear no one except the Lord God in heaven.

DONATA. We honour Cæsar as Cæsar, but we fear God only.

VESTIA: I am a Christian.

SECUNDA: I also, and will always be.

The Proconsul, who remained calm, tried to persuade them to retract, and offered to suspend judgment for thirty days, but this concession they refused to accept. Then the Proconsul, obliged to pronounce sentence, said: "Speratus, Nartzalus, Cittinus, Vestia, Donata, Secunda, and the others have confessed to being Christians, and refuse to return to the religion of the Romans, and we condemn them to perish by the sword."

The herald having proclaimed the sentence, Speratus said: "We give thanks to God!" Nartzalus said: "To-day we shall all be martyrs in heaven. God be praised!" And all responded: "God be praised!"

Monsieur Monceaux, in commenting on the martyrdom of these simple, uneducated peasants of Scillium, justly says: "It is a touching little drama, and the more so because it is so simple and naive. There are no fine phrases; there is no effort to be eloquent; there is an entire absence of the false note which is sometimes struck in apocryphal histories in which furious invectives from the magistrates are echoed by rodomontades from the martyrs."

The edict of Marcus Aurelius was, in the opinion of John Stuart Mill, one of the most tragic in all history, and the Emperor's biographer in the "Encyclopædia Britannica" says of it: "The one blemish in the life of Marcus Aurelius is his hostility to Christianity, which is the more remarkable that his morality comes nearer than any other heathen system to that of the New Testament; but it should be borne in mind that in the reign of Aurelius the Christians had assumed a much bolder attitude than they had hitherto done. Not only had they caused first interest and then alarm by the rapid increase of their numbers, but, not content with bare toleration in the empire, they declared war against all heathen rites, and, at least indirectly, against the Government which permitted them to exist. In the eyes of Aurelius they were atheists and foes of the social order, which he considered it the first duty of a

citizen's duties to maintain; and it is quite possible that, although the most amiable of men and of rulers, he may have considered it to be his duty to sanction measures for the extermination of such wretches."

The edict of Marcus Aurelius was followed in 202 by that of Septimus Severus. It was much more drastic than its predecessor, and among the numerous martyrdoms for which it was responsible were the well-known ones of Perpetua, Felicitas, Saturninus, Secundulus, and Revocatus. I have related their story in connection with the ruins of the amphitheatre at Carthage, where the tragedy took place.

In 249 came the edict of Decius, after about thirty years of comparative security to Christians. It was terrible in the severity of its terms, and was carried out with horrible zeal.

At this epoch the figure of St. Cyprian comes grandly to the fore. A teacher of rhetoric, with a great reputation, he was converted to Christianity in 246, ordained a presbyter in 247, and in the following year, greatly against his will, was elected to the See of Carthage.

The biographers of saints have always been tempted to exaggerate the iniquities of their heroes before conversion in order to enhance by contrast the beauty and piety of their Christian lives. Ac-

SHOPPING IN THE SOUK-EL-TROUK, TUNIS

cording to St. Gregory Nazianzen, Cyprian had indulged in all the excesses of heathenism, and was especially addicted to the practice of magical arts. Of these he endeavoured to make a wicked use in order to seduce a Christian woman named Justinia, of whom he was enamoured. His evil designs were frustrated. Justinia betook herself to Christ, and Cyprian, burning his black books, also professed Christianity.

Decius ordered that all Christians were to present themselves at the Capitol within a stated limit of time to swear loyalty to the Emperor and abjure their faith, failing which they would be condemned to death and all property confiscated from the heirs. It would seem that years of immunity from oppression had weakened the heroism of the Christian flock. Many of them showed little desire to wear the martyr's crown at the price of an immediate and suffering death. No sooner had the edict been made known than the Capitol was besieged by a crowd of Christians, eager and impatient to secure their personal safety on any terms. Despairingly St. Cyprian cried: "At the first words, at the first threats of the enemy, many of our brothers have betrayed their faith. They have not succumbed under the blows of the persecution, but with voluntary haste. Oh, tell me, when you approached so willingly the Capitol to commit this

infamous crime, did not your feet totter? Were your eyes not blurred? Did not your limbs fail you or your hearts palpitate? Were not your tongues paralyzed when you, children of God, betrayed and renounced Christ, having solemnly sworn to renounce the devil and the world?

"Oh, my tears express my misery better than my words! I suffer, my brothers; oh, I suffer with you! The shepherd is wounded by the wounds of his flock. My heart is even with the culpable, and I take my part in the misery of their defection. I lament with those who lament, I weep with those who weep; and when they are humiliated, so also am I."

But the good Bishop, so very lovable, though sometimes so austere, had happier moments, in one of which he exultantly exclaims: "Before dungeons and before death you have valiantly resisted the world. You have offered up a superb spectacle to God and given an example to all your brothers. Oh! with what happiness on your return from the struggle does the Church receive you to her maternal breast! With what joy and triumph does she open her doors to these holy battalions decked with trophies taken from a terrestrial foe! In your triumph there are women who have overcome the weakness of their sex, maidens crowned with a double palm, and children whose bravery has been

far in advance of their years. Oh ! I am transported with joy before the heroism of your faith, which brings such glory to our mother the Church. Your torn limbs have conquered the iron nails which mangled them. What a triumph for Christ ! It was He Himself who relieved, fortified, and encouraged His defenders."

If these heroes received their fortitude from above, it was largely through the medium of their pastor, and this St. Cyprian fully realized. It was he who had rescued the African Church from what threatened to be a terrible and final defeat. What, then, was he to do when the cry arose, " St. Cyprian to the lions!" Was he to leave his lambs to the mercy of the wolves, knowing their weakness, and that they had such need of him? Though he knew well enough that flight would entail accusations of fear from his enemies, and also from some of his friends, yet he decided to hide himself. The courage with which he subsequently met his martyrdom proved, if proof were needed, how utterly unjust were the imputations of cowardice levelled against him.

The General who exposes himself to be killed by the first shot from the enemy, fails in his duty to his army. It may be argued that the example of the Bishop's martyrdom would have encouraged the steadfastness of his flock more than his words ; but

St. Cyprian knew that this was not so. There had already been many splendid instances of unflinching heroism; but stories of torture terrified rather than emboldened the weak-hearted, who needed to be strengthened by constant expressions of sympathy and oft-repeated words of encouragement. Tact and eloquence were needed for dealing with these waverers—the wisdom of the serpent combined with the gentleness of the dove. By his natural eloquence, his trained and cultivated rhetoric, his exceptional powers of organization, and his lovable personality, St. Cyprian was qualified, and he alone, to rally the broken spirit and faltering courage of the Church.

St. Cyprian, therefore, quitted Carthage, and retired to an unknown spot, from which—through the intermediary of two Bishops, Caldonius and Herculanus, and of two priests, Rogatius and Numidicus—he directed the defence of his army. Once more I am tempted to quote Monsieur Alcais, though the beauty of his style defies adequate translation:

"In the furious tempest which beat on the community from every quarter, nothing escaped St. Cyprian's notice. Though he battled with all his power the perils which threatened his Church from outside, he neglected no detail of internal administration. From a distance he distributed

VEILED WOMEN IN THE SOUK-DES-ÉTOFFES

Graham Peterson

counsel and reprimands; he nominated priests and deacons; he delivered sermons, and gave instructions for the succour of the poor, to whom he relinquished all that remained of his fortune; he arranged for the visiting of the faithful in prison, for the relief of the sick, and for the welcome of strangers. All this was thought out with a clearness of conception, a precision of detail, and a calmness of manner which brings before our eyes the figure of a brave captain steering his vessel through threatening rocks on a raging sea. Calmly he surveys the dangers which confront him, and deriding the cowardly wails of his terror-stricken crew, meets each successive peril with an increase of courage and resource."

For sixteen months St. Cyprian directed the affairs of the Church with his powerful though invisible hand, at the end of which time the persecutions suddenly ceased, and he returned to his decimated flock in Carthage, zealously devoting himself to their interests for seven years.

In 258 Valerian issued his edict against the Christians, and St. Cyprian was urged by his friends, among whom were many pagans, to again take flight; but this he refused to do. Doubtless he felt that he had done all that was possible with precept, and that by an example of fortitude he could now best serve his brothers. He retired to his villa in the environs of Carthage, and while

waiting for his arrest, wrote a last and beautiful letter to his children. He was condemned to death, and the execution took place at Ager Sexti, near Marsa.

During a terrible visitation of plague which had taken place at Carthage a few years previously, he had insisted that his flock should tend the pagan sick with the same tenderness that they did their own, reminding them that they were commanded to love their enemies. This, and the great charm of his personality, had endeared him to many who did not share his faith, and so it came about that in his last journey to Ager Sexti he was accompanied by an immense crowd of sympathizers, both Christian and pagan, many of the former begging that they might be allowed to die with their master. Some, who could not otherwise have seen, climbed up the olive-trees which surrounded the place of execution.

St. Cyprian, discarding his mantle and his tunic, handed them to his deacons, and, kneeling down, prayed in silence. Nor did he speak again, except to ask a friend to give gold to the executioner. He arranged the bandage across his eyes, and made a sign that he was ready. With a single blow the axe-man severed his head from his body.

St. Augustine, perhaps a more famous Carthaginian than his forerunner, St. Cyprian, was born

at Tagaste, a town in Numidia, in 354, and the name of Monica, his mother, is almost as well known as his own. A considerable amount of his time and energy was spent in combating the various heresies which had sprung up in the Church, of which the most notable were those of the Arians, the Manichæans, and the Pelagians.

Aria was a priest of the Alexandrian Church, and his views were widely accepted by all sorts and conditions of men. They were favoured by Julian, commonly called the Apostate, embraced by Valens, and later by Genseric, all of whom persecuted the orthodox with terrible zeal. Aria is described by the not unbiassed Epiphanies as being a man "inflamed by his own opinionativeness, of a tall stature, with a dominant look, his figure composed like that of the subtle serpent, to deceive the guileless by his crafty exterior. His dress was simple; and his address, soft and smooth, was calculated to persuade and attract, so that he drew away 700 virgins from the Church to his party."

Pelagius was a British monk of Scottish birth, whose heretical views—of a kindly, optimistic nature, strangely unlike those generally associated with Scotch theology—were as follows: (1) That Adam's sin was purely personal, and affected none but himself; (2) that each man, consequently, is born as incorrupt as Adam, and only falls into sin under the

force of temptation and evil example; (3) that children who die in infancy, being untainted by sin, are saved without baptism.

St. Augustine wrote fifteen long treatises in violent opposition to these views, and in 416, at the Council of Carthage, seventy-eight Bishops anathematized Pelagius and his disciple Celestius. St. Augustine then addressed a letter to Pope Innocent explaining his views on the matter, in response to which the heretics were condemned by His Holiness.

The last years of St. Augustine's life witnessed the invasion of North Africa by the Vandals under Genseric, and he died in 430 at his beloved Hippo, while the city, of which he had been Bishop for so many years, was actually under siege.

When Rome fell into the hands of Alaric, many of her wealthy citizens fled to Carthage, which became the capital of the ancient world. "Where," says Salvien, "is there such treasure as in Africa? Where else can one find such a flourishing commerce or such splendid bazaars? Carthage, the Tyre and Rome of Africa, is the seat of learning and law, the university of art and philosophy."

But her end as a great Roman capital was near at hand, for she was enfeebled on one side by excess of luxury, and on the other by the narrow outlook of her Christian population. The latter, devoting

its intellect to categorical definitions of the indefinable, and useless probings into hidden mysteries, neglected the training of the body and the duty of organized physical defence; and though prepared to welcome, if need be, the martyr's death, the Christians were in no way equipped to resist invasion from Genseric and his hardy Vandals.

On this subject Mr. C. W. C. Oman aptly says: "When a State contains masses of men who devote their whole energies to a selfish attempt to save their own individual souls, while letting the world around them slide on as best it may, then the body politic is diseased. The Roman Empire, in its fight with the barbarians, was in no small degree hampered by this attitude of so many of its subjects. The ascetic took the barbarian invasions as judgments from heaven, rightly inflicted upon a wretched world, and not as national calamities, which called on every citizen to join in the attempt to repel them. Many men complacently interpreted the troubles of the fifth century as the tribulations predicted in the Apocalypse, and watched them develop with something like joy, since they must portend the close approach of the Second Advent of our Lord. This apathetic attitude of many Christians during the afflictions of the Empire was maddening to the heathen minority which still survived among the educated classes. They roundly accused

Christianity of being the ruin of the State by its anti-social teachings, which led men to neglect every duty of the citizen."

When, in 439, Genseric attacked Carthage, she succumbed with such pathetic feebleness that, if shades can blush, then surely Scipio and his gallant soldiers must have reddened as they watched, in shamed amazement, the spiritless defence and pusillanimous submission of their descendants.

So ended the power and might of Roman Carthage. Her last hours arouse our pity; but it is a pity mingled with contempt, and widely different from the sympathy and admiration which well from our hearts when we remember the heroic death-struggle of her Punic predecessor.

CHAPTER IV

Arab Tunis

The most characteristic and delightful feature of Arab Tunis is undoubtedly the "souk," or covered bazaar. Practical as well as picturesque, cool in summer and warm in winter, it affords such perfect protection from the unkind freaks of the elements that I wonder why it has not been more generally adopted in other cities.

I do not doubt that the fresh-air enthusiast, so much to the fore just now, will throw up his hands and eyes in horror at the idea, and will make wild calculations as to the probable number of malignant germs and microbes to be found in every cubic inch of such stagnant air. I turn a deaf ear to such pessimistic theories. The air of the souks has always struck me as being particularly fresh and pleasant.

The souks lie in the heart of the old town, which, enclosed by medieval walls, is now also girdled by an electric tramway. Though the latter may inter-

fere with historical sentiment, it is an undoubted convenience to European and Arab alike, bringing within easy reach any of the several city gates. The Porte de France, formerly called the Gate of the Sea, is the entrance nearest to the modern town, and is, consequently, the one generally used by tourists in their first peregrinations. This is, perhaps, unfortunate, as the Rue de l'Église, to which it gives access, is much modernized, and the Italians and Jews who own its shops are terrible touters, giving the tourist little peace as they vigorously endeavour to thrust their wares upon him, destroying his illusions about the dignified calm of Oriental manners.

Let us avoid for the moment the Rue de l'Église, and, taking the electric tram at the Porte de France, leave behind us the lofty hotels and plate-glass windows of the European quarter. Speeding past innumerable Arab cafés, let us alight at the gateway of Bab Menara, and, passing under the fine old archway, enter the Souk des Selliers, where the saddlers ply their useful and artistic trade. Saddlery is not to the Arab, as it is to us, a commodity purely utilitarian. For him it is not sufficient that it should be designed with due regard to comfort of man and beast, and that the materials and workmanship should be such as will give the maximum degree of strength, lightness, and endurance. The Arab loves his horse, and he likes to honour it by

ENTRANCE TO THE GRAND MOSQUE FROM THE SOUK
EL-ATTARIN, TUNIS

lavishly decorating its numerous trappings ; first, by dyeing the leather a rich colour, usually red, and then by embroidering with intricate designs, worked in silks of every hue, all those parts which are not exposed to friction.

The saddlery of Tunis has been famous ever since her most palmy days in the thirteenth century, when most of the larger souks were built, and when caravans from Darfour and the Soudan brought slaves, gold, gum, ivory, and ostrich feathers, and took back costumes, embroideries, arms, and saddlery. Even to-day Tunis supplies numerous patrons in Morocco and Algeria with these things. But although the Tunis saddler has happily plenty of Arab patrons, he is trying to extend his clientèle, and beside the gorgeous saddles, the gay harness, and the dandified riding-boots, all of which are well worth careful examination, there may now be seen footstools, hand-bags, letter-cases, purses, cigarette-cases, dainty feminine bedroom slippers, and many other attractive odds and ends, from which the visitor can select souvenirs for himself and presents for his friends at home.

Another striking feature in the saddlers' souk is the marvellous display of hats, though these are only to be seen when the weather has become hot. They are so enormous and so gay, that at the first glance one is inclined to think they are eccentric

advertisements. In diameter they measure at least 3 feet from brim to brim, the crown being also very large, as they are worn over the turban. I startled my friends by wearing one at a fancy-dress ball in London, and no one would believe that it was a genuine piece of headgear as worn to-day by thousands of Arabs all over Tunisia. They are made of supple grass, and, though very heavy, are as flexible as a Panama. Indeed, it is their extreme flexibility which brings them into the saddlers' souk, for they need to be strengthened at the brim by four pieces of leather, shaped like leaves, which are dyed and embroidered in a great variety of colours to suit the fancy of all customers.

In Tunis one sees these hats being worn occasionally, but not frequently, as they are chiefly used by country folk when mounted on their camels, mules, or horses; but in Kairouan they are ubiquitous. They are provided with a sliding strap, worn under the chin, which can be loosened, so that the hat may lie on the back when not needed as a protection from the sun.

In the middle of this rather narrow souk lies a marabout's tomb, which, though I mention it last, will immediately arrest the attention of the visitor, as it is painted brilliant vermilion and green, with occasional floral patterns in chrome yellow. A lamp hangs from the roof above it, and is lighted on

THE MARABOUT'S TOMB IN THE SOUK-DES-SELLIERS,
TUNIS

Graham Petrie

Friday, the Arab Sunday, on which day coloured silk flags are placed in the sockets arranged at either end for their reception. I was told by a guide that this marabout was a saddler, and that he wished to be buried in his souk, that he might never be forgotten by the brethren of his trade. Even holy men, it seems—for such the marabout are supposed to be—like to be missed.

A characteristic and interesting feature of Arab saddlery which I forgot to mention is the introduction of leopard-skin. One frequently sees handsome skins hanging from the lintels of the shops which will be cut up and used for both saddles and harness. It is particularly effective and rich-looking when used for moderately wide straps, edged with red leather, and stitched with gold or silver thread.

The Souk of the Metal Workers is some distance away, and so, for the convenience of the purchaser who is pressed for time, Arab stirrups, bits, etc., are sold in this souk. The stirrups have a large flat base, perhaps 5 inches by 7, the corners being used as spurs. They are generally damascened with silver.

Although fairly industrious, the workers in the souks are rarely too busy to pass the time of day, and chat about the details of their trade, and this is not with an eye to the main chance, but from a

perfectly genuine spirit of friendliness. Though it is quite easy to travel in Tunisia without knowing any foreign language, yet only in the large shops is English spoken, and most of the guides know but a few words. A very considerable proportion of the townsfolk speak French, and if one has occasion to speak to someone who cannot, a friendly neighbour or passer-by will generally come to the rescue; but of course one often longs to be able to talk their own language.

One so often hears the poor Arab abused, that it is a pleasure to be able to record my own favourable impressions. Painting day after day in the crowded souks, often in positions very inconvenient to everyone but myself, I had a fair opportunity of judging their manners and their general behaviour towards an intrusive foreign artist, and I can only say that I was continually amazed at their forbearance, their friendly interest, and their evident wish to add to my comfort in any small way which suggested itself. I have never in England, France, Italy, or Holland, experienced such undeviating courtesy, and moreover, with one single exception, no reward for virtue in the form of backsheesh was ever hinted at; and although I often wanted to offer a present, I never did so, hating to demoralize their hospitable traditions.

On my second visit to Tunis I was obliged to

go through so much hand-shaking that I was able to realize the penalty paid once a year by the President of the United States. Dozens of Arabs of whom I had no recollection greeted me effusively, inquired after my sister, who had accompanied me on my first visit, proffered the hospitality of a cup of coffee, and hoped I would again paint their shops.

I am bound to admit that this pleasant tradition of hospitality, which extends beyond their doorsteps into their streets, does not prevent them from asking for their goods three or four times as much as they are willing to accept; but I think this is a demoralization brought about by the influx of tourists and their guides, for the latter always demand a commission on sales. When buying a pair of native slippers in one of the numerous souks devoted to their manufacture, and which are rarely patronized by the tourist, I was surprised to find that the prices were rigidly fixed, and that no bargaining was possible.

The old Arab town is crowned by the Kasbah, which formerly contained the palace of the Beys, the barracks of the native troops, and the prison from which Charles V. liberated 10,000 slaves in 1535. It is now used as a fortress for the French soldiers, and only the exterior walls of the original building remain. Opposite, is the Café du Kasbah, with its huge fig-tree, under the shade of which, in the late

afternoon, numbers of Arabs may be seen, chatting or playing draughts, while enjoying the cool breeze which commonly springs up towards sundown.

Close by is the town palace of the Dar-el-Bey, little used as a residence by the present Bey, but which he visits once or twice a week for the transaction of business. It may be viewed by visitors, and is well worth seeing, if only for the fine panorama to be enjoyed from its roof. It is comparatively modern, having been built by Hamouda Pasha at the end of the eighteenth century. A few yards further on the Rue Sidi-ben-Zaid is graced by the mosque of Sidi-ben-Youssef, with its octagonal minaret, of Turkish design; from its portals the huge tower of the Grand Mosque looms in dignified proportions against the sky.

Behind the mosque of Sidi-ben-Youssef is the native hospital, founded a century ago by a wealthy Arab lady. It neither receives nor requires pecuniary assistance from France, though most of the doctors are Frenchmen, a few being Arabs who have qualified themselves in French hospitals. The patients, who are all Arabs, pay nothing. It appeared to be admirably arranged, and organized in accordance with modern ideas of hygiene. Indeed, I have never seen a hospital which seemed so pleasant a place to be ill in. A small mosque is attached to it, into which I peered, though it had

no architectural interest. At the back there is a fair-sized cemetery, in which several consumptive-looking patients were roaming. To a European the close proximity of the cemetery might be depressing; but the Arab has no horror of death, and to him it is but a pleasant garden, in which to dream of the houries awaiting him in his future paradise. Many of the tombstones were marked by short columns surmounted by carved stone turbans, painted red or green.

Returning to the Rue Sidi-ben-Zaid, a turn to the right brings us to the Souk-el-Trouk. It is pleasant to turn from the torrid glare of the open street into the cool shade of the covered bazaar, the comparative sombreness of which is relieved here and there by a brilliant shaft of light or a constellation of dazzling sunbeams.

The Souk-el-Trouk is the souk of the tailors, and here, in numerous little shops, the sartorial needs of the Arab population are fashioned and temptingly displayed. I call them shops for want of a better word, but they are as unlike the European shop as is anything one can imagine. They are really recesses separated from each other by coupled columns, painted with stripes of red and green, which support a continuous cornice, richly carved and coloured. There are no windows or doors, and the shop is raised some 4 feet above the ground. To

this elevation the tailor nimbly vaults, for there are no steps to assist him. Sitting cross-legged in orthodox fashion, he there cuts out, pieces together, embroiders, and embellishes the gay silk waistcoats, gandouras, and other garments beloved of the Arab.

Conservative in all matters, the Arab is especially averse to change in the matter of clothes. "Lady Betty," "Madame Perla," and other feminine writers who fill columns in the weekly papers on the fashions of the hour, may congratulate themselves on the love of novelty for novelty's sake which so strongly characterizes the Occidental as compared with the Oriental; they could never pursue their professions in the East. Not only do the fashions of the Arab never change, but they are very restricted. Though every Arab wears a gandoura, more or less richly embroidered, it is always worked in one of three accepted patterns, from which no deviation nor any combination is permitted. The only matter in which personal taste is allowed to show itself is in the choice of colour. In this respect entire freedom is permitted and taken full advantage of, though it is curious to note that the more delicate shades of pink, yellow, and mauve are generally worn by elderly men, while rich red and brown are in favour with their juniors.

Many of the tailors are Jews, as are also a large

number of the artisans throughout Tunis. The Jew is much less generally than elsewhere a middle-man, a fact which is perhaps attributable to the large fusion of Berber blood in his veins, owing to the extensive conversion of that race to Judaism in the first century, the Jews having immigrated to Tunis and Carthage in enormous numbers after the fall of Jerusalem. This also explains the fact that his physiognomy is less marked than elsewhere and frequently unrecognizable.

The tailors' souk is a very busy one, especially in the early morning, when hawkers of second-hand clothes collect such large crowds that it is often almost impossible to pass by. The vendor, laden with clothes on head and arms, pushes his way backwards and forwards, loudly proclaiming the merits of his goods and imploring the world to buy. There is something curiously exhilarating about the movement of an excited Oriental crowd, but much of the energy seems very futile. Those who are not selling should surely be buying, but very rarely have I noticed a sale effected at one of these auctions; and though, with eager eyes and fingers, every article is carefully examined, after much shouting and gesticulation, it is almost invariably returned to the arms of the hawker.

Half-way down the souk, a porch with two slender columns and a few steps denotes the

EXTRACT FROM THE CODE OF CIVIL PROCEDURE

"Children of God, remember to prostrate yourselves before the Almighty on high.

"This is the hour of prayer.

"You will not live for ever.

"When they are dead the ungodly will repent their error.

"God alone is God, and Mohammed is His Prophet."

Then there is a general sortie. Some respond to the call and make their way to the mosque, while others saunter home, because they do not care, by remaining, to make their negligence of religious observances too obvious. In a few seconds the café is completely deserted; only the three marabouts in their green and red tombs behind the iron grille are left.

Two hours later the café is again largely patronized, but there is no longer any cheerful chatter. Silence reigns, and the dais and divans are covered with what look like crumpled, shapeless, half-empty sacks, which give the building the air of a deserted corn-exchange. It is the hour of the siesta, and these shapeless heaps of tattered rags cover the forms of somnolent Arabs, who are drowsing through the hot hours of the day. Perhaps it is because he is addicted to sleeping out of doors on the dusty roadside, where flies and other insects more destructive of repose and pleasant dreams abound,

that the Arab has acquired the habit of covering every inch of his body, face, hands, and feet, with his burnous before courting slumber. Such, at any rate, is his practice, and it is not an easy thing to distinguish between a half-empty sack of potatoes and a dormant son of Islam.

Presently, when the air has become a little cooler, the inanimate sacks will begin to move, heads will emerge from their folds, eyes will be rubbed, and the bewildered expression of those who are quitting the pleasant land of Nod will change into one of alertness; hands will be clapped as signal that coffee is to be served, and the nervous, noisy bustle of life will begin once more.

I was very anxious to make a sketch of this café, and asked the picturesque Oriental who was brewing coffee if I might do so. He replied in voluble Arabic of which I did not understand a word, but I gathered that backsheesh was demanded, and I forthwith placed a franc in the palm of the nut-brown hand. This was gravely and courteously returned, and, feeling completely nonplussed, I called to my assistance a French-speaking shop-man from across the street, who explained that as an American artist had lately paid twenty-five francs for the privilege of painting in the café, I was expected to pay the same amount. I hastened to disclaim the honour of hailing from the land

INTERIOR OF THE CAFÉ DES MARABOUTS, TUNIS

of Stars and Stripes and gold untold. I assured this greedy Arab that I was but a poor and humble craftsman who was trying to earn his living, and who, at the same time, desired to make known to the world the wonderful beauty of this ancient café, so that its fame might resound on every lip and its owner be held in coveted esteem by all men. At last it was arranged that I should pay five francs, and that for this sum I should be allowed to come as often as might prove necessary for the completion of the picture. This incident was the one exception which proved the rule of Arab hospitality. Though I spent six months in Tunisia, painting all the time, it was the only occasion on which I was asked to pay anything for putting up my easel.

Nearly opposite the Café des Marabouts is the shop owned by Monsieur Babouché, one of the largest and most important in the souks, where all kinds of delightful things—embroideries, carpets, metal-work, jewellery, and inlaid furniture—may be bought, and, if intelligently bargained for, at very reasonable prices; but whether one buys or not, hospitality is the tradition of the house, and cigarettes and coffee are always offered to the visitor. It was from this shop that we enjoyed an admirable view of the celebrations on the Prophet's birthday.

For some days before this important anniversary

one is aware that something unusual is in the air, and about two days beforehand actual preparations commence. Cut-glass chandeliers, for some strange reason very dear to the heart of the Arab, are hung at intervals from the vaulted roofs of the bazaars, and there is a general increase of bustle and excitement. On the actual night of the festival the Jewish shops, of which there are a considerable number, were closed, and their shuttered fronts hung with costly carpets lent by Babouché and other important merchants; the Arab shopkeepers displaying all their choicest wares—not with any idea of effecting sales, but to honour the Prophet with all their belongings as well as with all their heart and soul. Formal bouquets of flowers were freely interspersed among the goods, and innumerable diminutive oil-lamps supplemented the light from the chandeliers. A week beforehand the whitewashers had been busy on the vaulted roofs, and the striped pillars and carved capitals had been vivified by a lavish use of vermilion and emerald green.

A great banquet was to be given in the Bey's palace, and when over, the Bey and his suite were to march in procession through the souks. No one seemed to be at all certain at what hour the banquet would commence, though six o'clock was suggested as a likely time. Notions as to when it would be finished and the procession begin were

still vaguer, but we were urged to be in our places not later than seven o'clock, and we sacrificed our comfort to the honour of the Prophet by making a very early and hurried dinner. The souks were already thronged when we arrived, and we had some difficulty in making our way to Babouché's shop, from the spacious loggia of which we had been courteously invited to watch the procession. Monsieur Babouché was there ready to receive us, and was magnificently dressed for the occasion, knowing that the Bey would probably honour him by a special visit. He is a big, handsome, middle-aged man, with well-cut features and a swarthy complexion, and he carried off his somewhat feminine finery without looking in the least effeminate. He wore an old rose-coloured silk turban, from which a white rose hung on his cheek, a pale yellow silk gandoura, a richly-embroidered orange waistcoat, white silk stockings, and canary-coloured slippers. A semi-transparent haik of striped white silk, draped over the gandoura and drawn across the turban, completed his very exquisite toilet.

The loggia was hung with old silk carpets, and numerous antique Arab lamps gave a soft but brilliant light. Ebony chairs, inlaid with ivory and mother-of-pearl, were arranged in rows for our accommodation.

The ladies of our party were delighted to find themselves in such a pleasant haven of refuge, with the surging and excited crowd well beneath them. The night was warm even in the open air, and in these covered arcades the numerous lamps, combined with thousands of human radiators, rendered it extremely hot. The picturesque lemonade sellers, who hail from Damascus, were doing a lively trade. They carry, attached to their shoulders by a strap, a huge semi-transparent glass vessel, secured and adorned by many brass bands, from which copper cups hang on chains. All the metal is brilliantly polished, silver and copper coins dangle from its neck, and a large lemon forms the stopper when in a vertical position. It is altogether a very imposing object, and the vendors are fine stalwart fellows as they need to be, for when full the bottle is of great weight. I greatly coveted the possession of this lemonade bottle, and on another occasion broached the subject to its owner; but he would not part with it for less than 200 francs, and, what was a more serious difficulty, required me to wait till he had received another from Damascus.

Watching, from our exalted seats, the thirsty quench their thirst and many other trifling incidents, amusing enough at the moment but hardly worth relating, we pleasantly passed the time, assuaging our own thirst with coffee provided by the hospitable

A HUMBLE CAFÉ IN THE SLIPPER-SOUK, TUNIS

Babouché. But there was no sign of the impending procession. The Bey and his Court were still dining, lingering, perhaps, over the final cigarette, while the faithful thousands were consuming themselves with impatience. The crowd looked so lively and gay that we said "Au revoir!" to our ladies, to elbow our way through it, and see what was going on in the Café des Marabouts.

We succeeded in reaching its portico, but its clientèle was so numerous that it was impossible to enter; so we made a little detour and came back to Babouché, just in time to receive His Highness the Bey.

His approach was heralded by the strains of a military band, and as he passed along the street costly rugs were thrown down for him to walk over, and the flowers which had adorned the ears of the faithful were cast beneath the feet of this descendant of the Prophet.

In such regal fashion His Highness arrived "chez Babouché," and received the respectful salutations of our host. One or two presentations were made, after which His Highness withdrew; the procession was reformed, and continued on its way through the enthusiastic crowd. The only disappointing part of the spectacle was the appearance of the Bey and his suite, who were dressed in uniform and wore the Turkish fez. His

Highness may possess many talents, social and diplomatic, of far greater importance than imposing appearance, and he certainly seemed to be popular with those whom it pleases to regard themselves as his subjects; but he is a short, stout man, and, in spite of a wealth of gold braid and the numerous medals and orders which were pinned on his breast, from the merely æsthetic point of view he cut a sorry figure in contrast to the imposing magnificence of Monsieur Babouché.

CHAPTER V

Arab Tunis (*continued*)

At the lower end of the Souk-el-Trouk, a brilliantly coloured red and green archway leads into the Souk-des-Étoffes (see illustration). Passing by it for the moment, and continuing in a straight line, one enters the Souk-des-Attarin, the scent bazaar (see illustrations). Architecturally this is one of the finest souks in Tunis, and probably one of the oldest. It is vaulted throughout, and adjoins on one side the great mosque of Djama Zitouna. On the other side are small shops, from which exhale delicious perfumes of jasmine and orange flower. The distillers of scent and owners of these shops are said to be descended from the Moors who were expelled from Spain, and to possess the keys of Andalusian castles owned by their ancestors. The scent is very powerful, and for practical purposes requires to be largely diluted with spirit. It is sold in slim bottles, charmingly decorated with gold and colour; but, unfortunately, their

glass stoppers rarely fit, and, as I know from sad experience, the scent is apt to evaporate. It is much safer to replace the stopper by a cork.

The Djama es Zitouna (the mosque of the olive-tree) dates from the eighth century, and is one of the oldest in Tunis, and is said to be built on the foundations of a Byzantine Christian church, dedicated to St. Olive. Like most of the great mosques, it is also a college, in which students are taught their religion and the laws which are based on it, and where they also receive instruction in literature, philosophy, mathematics, and history. It also boasts of an exceptionally fine Arab library of more than 6,000 volumes, most of them being in manuscript. Like all the other mosques in Tunis, it is rigorously closed to strangers, and one wonders how far its interior resembles to-day the description given by the Arab historian Abou-Mohammed-El-Abdery, who lived in the thirteenth century, and wrote an account of his travels in Africa when making a pilgrimage to Mecca from Haf Haha, a remote village in Morocco:

"The principal hall in this mosque contains a rich library, founded by the Hafside princess. This mosque, which must be classed among the most beautiful houses of prayer, is constructed with elegance and beautifully lighted. Round the interior court, which is open to the sky, circles a

ENTRANCE TO THE SOUK-DES-ÉTOFFES FROM THE SOUK-EL-TROUK, TUNIS

covered gallery. The trunks of trees, shaped in the manner of columns, are planted at intervals in the courtyard. By means of iron rings, to which ropes are attached, they support great pieces of canvas, sewn together and forming tents, under which the faithful take shelter every Friday during the hot weather."

The Zitouna college, with its magnificent library, must have contributed to the prestige of Tunis as a seat of learning. El-Abdery, who was a man of culture, says :

"If I had not entered Tunis, I should have declared that no trace of science was to be found in the West, and that its very name had been forgotten ; but the Master of the Universe has willed that no part of the world shall be altogether destitute of wise men. Here I have found a representative of every science, and persons trained in every department of human knowledge. Notwithstanding the thousand and one trials which are the inevitable accompaniment of travel, the culture of Tunis has been a great pleasure to me."

The upper side of the Djama Zitouna is bounded by the Souk-des-Étoffes, the most beautiful of all the souks. It differs from others in having three aisles, those at the sides being very narrow. The arcades are supported by short columns, doubtless Roman, but painted with stripes of green and red,

in the usual Tunisian manner. The richly-coloured silk embroideries overflow the shops, and are draped on cords stretched across the arcades. On one side there is an entrance to the mosque, and on the other a flight of wide steps lead to one of the old slave-markets, in which the guides do not fail to point out certain rings in the walls and columns, to which they assert the slaves were enchained.

The whole history of Tunisia is one of slavery. The early Phœnicians were famous slave-dealers. It is related that at the fall of Jerusalem before Antiochus Epiphanes the number of slaves sold to Phœnician dealers equalled that of the slain; and in the time of the Maccabees, Tyrian merchants accompanied the Syrian army for the purpose of purchasing Jews who might be taken captive during the wars.

The Carthaginians did not fail to carry on the traditions of their forebears, and, for this purpose, they departed from their general policy of keeping near the coast, and penetrated far into the Soudan to hunt the negroes. During some centuries of the Roman rule Christians were forced to work in the mines as slaves, and when we come to the days of Barbarossa and Charles V. the figures take one's breath away. The latter monarch rescued 10,000 Christian slaves from the Kasbah at Tunis, and 20,000 who had been employed in making the canal at La Goulette, but a few miles away.

THE SOUK-DES-ÉTOFFES, TUNIS

In those days the forlorn and deserted little court-yard off the Souk-des-Étoffes, of which I have been speaking, must have presented a very different aspect, and it is not difficult to imagine the tragic scenes which must have taken place within its walls. The relief afforded by Charles V. was only temporary. The slave trade flourished again, and Christian slaves were largely employed to build and man the corsair galleons, and thus assist the capture of co-religionists. The brigantines varied in size, the larger having as many as twenty-seven oars on either side. Each oar was rowed by four or five slaves, who were sometimes worked for ten or twelve hours at a stretch, the overseer occasionally putting a morsel of bread steeped in wine to a rower's mouth to save him from fainting. They were chained to their seats and urged to continued exertion by lashes on their bare flesh. A hundred soldiers armed with muskets, bows, and scimitars, occupied the poop.

In 1605 St. Vincent de Paul, then twenty-three years old, was left a legacy of 1,500 livres by a friend who died at Marseilles, and he was obliged, in consequence, to make a journey to that city. When returning by sea he was captured by some Tunisian corsairs, and in a letter written to his early patron, Monsieur de Commet, he has left a minute account of his capture and imprisonment, in quaint

old French, from which I have translated the following extracts:

"The wind was as favourable as possible, and we should have arrived that day at Narbonne, a distance of fifty leagues, if God had not allowed three Turkish brigantines to capture us with the boats which were returning from the fair at Beaucaire, esteemed by many the most beautiful in Christendom. The corsairs gave us chase, and their attacks were so furious that several of us were killed and all the rest wounded, I myself receiving an arrow wound which will be a memento for the rest of my life. At last we were obliged to give ourselves up to these savage beasts, worse than tigers. We had killed four or five of them, including one of their leaders, and because of this they cut up our pilot into a hundred thousand pieces. This done, they roughly dressed our wounds and chained us. Pursuing their marauding way, they made a thousand captures, but, nevertheless, gave liberty to those who had surrendered without fighting, after they had robbed them of all they possessed. At last, laden with merchandise, we took the route to Barbary.

"Having arrived in Tunis, we were exposed for sale after a 'procès-verbal,' in which they said that we had been captured from a Spanish vessel. Without this lie we should have been taken to the Consul,

sent there by our King to secure freedom of commerce for the French.

"The procedure of our sale was that we were gagged, stripped quite naked, and only allowed to wear a cap and a couple of strands of wool. We were then marched through the town with chains at the neck, and, having made five or six promenades, we were at last taken to the slave-market. Here the merchants came to inspect us in the same way as they would a horse or a bullock, making us open our mouths to see our teeth, fingering our ribs, probing our wounds, making us walk, trot, and run, testing our strength with heavy weights, and subjecting us to a thousand other brutalities.

"I was bought by a fisherman, who, finding that I was but an extra vexation added to those of the sea, sold me almost immediately to a quack doctor, an expert distiller of herbs. He was an old man, and very humane and reasonable. He told me that he had worked hard for fifty years in search of the philosopher's stone, but quite in vain. He was more successful in the transformation of metals. I have seen him melt together equal proportions of gold and silver, adding to them a powder, and placing all together in a crucible. This melting-pot he kept on the fire for twenty-four hours, and then, opening it, found that all the silver had become gold. This he sold for the benefit of the poor.

My occupation was to attend to the fires of ten or twelve furnaces, and in doing so, thanks to God, I had more pleasure than suffering. The old man became fond of me, and liked to talk of alchemy, and still more of his faith, to which he made the greatest efforts to convert me, tempting me with all his riches and wealth.

"I was with this old man from September, 1605, till the following August, when he was taken away to work for the Grand Turk—but in vain, for he died of regret on the way.

"He left me to his nephew, a true anthropomorphite, who sold me immediately after the death of his uncle, as he had heard that Monsieur de Breve, the King's Ambassador in Turkey, was coming, with good and special patents from the Grand Turk, to rescue the Christian slaves.

"I was now bought by a renegade from Nice, who took me to his farm in the mountains, where the land was very dried up and parched. One of his three women was a Greek Christian, but schismatic. She was intelligent and kind, and still more so towards the end, when, thanks to the unbounded grace of God, she was allowed to be instrumental in rescuing her husband from his apostasy, replacing him within the fold of the Church, and delivering me from slavery. Ten months passed before this end was achieved, but at last we escaped in a little

THE APPROACH TO THE ANCIENT SLAVE-MARKET FROM
THE SOUK-DES-ÉTOFFES, TUNIS

boat, and arrived on July 28 at Aigues Mortes. Later we reached Avignon, where, in the Church of St. Pierre, the renegade, with tears in his eyes and sobs in his throat, re-embraced Christianity, to the honour of God and to the edification of the spectators."

In the days of St. Vincent de Paul, Tunis must have possessed numerous slave-markets, but the one which adjoins the Souk-des-Étoffes and another, which is now known as the Souk-des-Chéchias, were among those which were used until the abolition of slavery in 1842.

One of the most charming examples of Arab architecture in Tunis is the Court of the Kadi, and it is interesting also as a place where one can observe some of the ways and customs of the native population.

It is here that all matters relating to family life and religion are discussed and settled, such as disputes about marriage, divorce, inheritance, etc. The building has three aisles, all arcaded, the voussoirs of the arches being alternately black and white. The central aisle is open to the sky, but is covered by an awning when the weather is hot. Round the sides of the court recessed bays form the chambers in which the Kadi sit, and whence, having listened to the evidence from both sides, they award justice. A pleasant little fountain plays in

the centre of the court, and in a small room near the entrance, prisoners required for evidence are chained till called up by the Kadi. On the occasion of my visit one unhappy culprit, chained and manacled, was waiting here. Thursday morning is the best time to visit the court: it is then generally crowded with excited Arabs, who take no pains to conceal their varied and violent emotions. The Kadi are usually elderly men, and several of them look very old and venerable. They are richly dressed, and wear special turbans of fine white linen, folded in a peculiar and elaborate way. They sit on luxurious divans, replete with soft cushions of rich silk brocade. In one or two cases I noticed that plate-glass screens had been arranged for protection from draughts, or possibly from the over-violent gesticulations of excited witnesses.

I committed the grave indiscretion of asking my guide if the office of the Kadi was hereditary. He was highly indignant, and assured me that exceptional ability and arduous study were necessary to attain this honourable and important position, which, he added, was equivalent to that held by the cardinals of the Roman Church. I fancy, however, that his acquaintance with the organization of the Roman Church was very slight. The court is largely used for obtaining divorce, and numbers of closely veiled women are always present. One feels

sorry for these unhappy women, who in many cases are guiltless of any fault beyond that of barrenness, or of being no longer young, or of having lost their good looks. A man may divorce his wife without having any cause for complaint, but merely because he is tired of her, though in such a case he is obliged to return any dower she may have brought at her marriage. With some of the desert tribes divorce is almost as common as marriage, which takes place at a very early age. A boy of fourteen is frequently married to a divorced woman, who, being older and wiser, and having a knowledge of affairs, is able to take care of him and manage the household. Ten or twelve years later he marries a young girl of twelve, and his first wife sinks to the position of a servant.

The Arab is allowed by the Koran to have four wives, but only the well-to-do are able to afford this luxury, and a very large proportion of the population only possess one, or at the most two. James Bruce, the well-known eighteenth-century traveller, endeavours to justify the custom of polygamy in Eastern countries with amusing ingenuity. "Women in England," he argues, "are generally capable of bearing children at fourteen; let the other end be forty-eight, when they bear no more. For thirty-four years, therefore, an English woman bears children. An Arab woman, on the other hand, if she begins to bear children at eleven, seldom or never

has a child after twenty. The time of her child-bearing is nine years, and of four women taken together thirty-six years. So that the English woman bears children for only two years less than do the four Arab women whom Mahomet has allowed to be the wives of one man ; and if it be granted that an English woman may bear at fifty, the terms are equal. The reasons against polygamy which subsist in England do not by any means subsist in Arabia, and that being the case, it would be unworthy of the wisdom of God, and an unevenness in His ways which we should never see, to subject two nations, so differently circumstanced, to the same observances."

Fearful lest he should wound the susceptibilities of English women by appearing to suggest that their usefulness is confined to their capacity for child-bearing, Bruce quaintly adds: "No one, I hope, will pretend that at forty-eight or fifty an English woman is not an agreeable companion. Perhaps the last years are, to thinking minds, more agreeable than the first. We grow old together, and we have a near prospect of dying together. Nothing can present a more agreeable prospect of social life than monogamy in England."

Although the Place Bab Souika is just outside the Medina, the portion of the old town enclosed by walls, and round which the electric tramways circu-

late, yet it is, as it were, the Ludgate Circus of Arab Tunis. From it six important streets radiate, and it lies in the direct line between the "souks" and the Place Halfouaine. A few years ago it must have been one of the most picturesque corners of Tunis, and it still has its moments of glory. On certain evenings, towards sundown, when the domes of the mosque of Sidi Mahrez are of a rosy pink, and their outlines are relieved against a violet sky, the beauty of effect is so startling that one is quite unconscious of tramway-cars, telegraph-wires, and other blemishes of a similar kind. Moreover, apart from effects of light, it is full of characteristic native life; but already it has lost, from the very importance of its situation, something of its Oriental charm, and it will soon, I fear, be entirely spoilt from the artist's point of view.

The mosque of Sidi Mahrez is entirely different, in plan and general design, from the other mosques in Tunis. It was built in the seventeenth century, and shows the influence of Turkish architecture and of the great mosque of St. Sophia at Constantinople. It has a large central dome on to which four half domes abut, the angles being filled with four smaller domes. The minaret, which was not built till the beginning of the nineteenth century, is square in plan and is of the traditional North African design.

TUNIS

Arab Tunis alternates between seemingly deserted quarters—quiet streets of windowless houses where the women are busy in their secluded courtyards, while their menfolk are working in the souks or idling in the cafés—and districts which teem with life and bustle. The Place Bab Souika conspicuously belongs to the latter category, and affords examples of most of the characteristic features of the city. Butchers' shops—never an agreeable sight, and particularly unpleasant in a hot climate where flies abound and the use of ice is unknown—line one side of the square, but are happily screened from view to some extent by quaint bread-stalls, fruit-stalls, and vegetable-stalls. Crowds of figures doing everything and nothing; barrows of this, that, and the other; scores of unimaginably diminutive donkeys, carrying portly Arabs or mountains of fodder; a general confusion of things useful and useless; complexions of every hue, set in wrappings of every colour; noises of all kinds, from the horn of the tramcar and the screech of its brake to the braying of asses and the drumming of itinerant musicians; added to the calls of the hawkers advertising their wares, and the uncontrolled semi-hysterical laughter of the negroes—all contribute to the sensation that the Place Bab Souika is a sort of Oriental Bedlam, from which, fascinating as it may be for a short time, it is very pleasant to escape.

PLACE BAB-SOUIKA AND THE MOSQUE OF SIDI-MAHREZ

The streets round Bab Souika are largely inhabited by the negroes, and their polished ebony skins, which so pleasantly reflect the brilliant blue of the sky, form a frequent note in the crowd.

In the numerous native cafés of this neighbourhood the music of the gramophone is often to be heard, voicing its records of Arab songs and melodies to a keenly interested and appreciative audience; and certainly that wonderfully ingenious but rather trying invention is able to imitate, with an almost uncanny fidelity, the thin reedy timbre of the native instruments and the nasal quality of their chants and prayers.

From the Place Bab Souika a narrow but picturesque street leads to the Place Haloufaine. It is a busy, noisy thoroughfare, full of cafés and barbers' establishments. The Arab barber is not only qualified to shave your beard and pate, but will with equal readiness cup you, extract your teeth, manicure your hands, staining the nails a beautiful red, or pedicure your feet. In warm weather all these operations are performed in the publicity of the open street. To give confidence, and to show that he is no novice in his profession, the barber sometimes adorns the outside of his shop with two glass cases, one being full of teeth, the other having corns pinned like butterflies against a velvet background.

The mosque in the Place Haloufaine is very large and popular, but its exterior is disappointing. It has a spacious loggia on the first floor, but any beauty of architectural effect which the building might otherwise have had is destroyed by the intrusion of an Arab café decorated in very tawdry taste. The seats of this café must number some hundreds, and spread far into the square. In the late afternoon it is always crowded with Arabs of all ages, of every class, and arrayed in every kind of garment, and on the occasion of any festival it is one of the gayest corners of Tunis. It is also one of the haunts of the story-teller, the snake-charmer, and the sand-diviner.

CHAPTER VI

Modern Tunis

When looking at some photographs taken a year or two after the commencement of the French occupation, it seemed to me little short of marvellous that such a transformation could have been achieved in a quarter of a century; yet the Frenchman who was showing me the photographs, and to whom I expressed my surprise, replied that it was nothing compared to what we had done in Egypt!

As regards developing the agricultural and commercial possibilities of the country, I dare say he was right, though of course the potentialities in Egypt were greater. Still, when I looked at the photograph of the ground where now lies the Avenue Jules Ferry and the Rue de France, and which represented nothing but a barren stretch of sandy earth, and when I remembered that previous to that occupation the shallow water of the Lake of Tunis came right up to the Porte de France—the gate into the Arab town, which was originally known as the

Bab-el-Bher, meaning the Gate of the Sea—I was not a little impressed.

The Avenue Jules Ferry, which is the most important street of French Tunis, is planned on a magnificent scale. It is about half a mile long, and covers the greater part of the distance between the Porte de France and the harbour. It has a central promenade, with four rows of shady evergreen trees, and provides a delightful lounge in the summer-time. In the afternoon it is gay with the crimson ribbons and silver hairpins of numerous "bonnes," under whose indifferent supervision little French children, with the shortest of frocks and the longest of under garments, entangle their hoops in the legs of sauntering pedestrians; while in the evening a band plays two or three times a week, and penny chairs can be engaged, as in our own parks.

On either side of this shady avenue most of the important buildings are erected. There is a cathedral, a theatre, an opera-house, a casino, etc., and most of the large cafés and restaurants are also here, as well as the bigger shops, though the post-office, which is a fine building, is for some reason erected in a street of secondary importance.

It is true that as one gets nearer the Porte the houses become very insignificant, many having only one story, and appear ludicrously mean in comparison with the imposing proportions of the

A POPULAR CAFÉ, TUNIS

Graham Petrie.

boulevard itself; but they make one realize how the French plan their towns with an eye to the future, instead of allowing them to plan themselves, according to the needs of the moment, as is our happy-go-lucky method.

On July 14, the anniversary of the birth of the present French Republic, a great fête takes place. There is a military parade in the Avenue Jules Ferry, and in the evening the trees are illuminated with thousands of fairy-lights and coloured lanterns. The public buildings are also illuminated, and the private houses and shops, according to the means of their owners. The effect is really very brilliant and charming, and one hopes that the Arabs are properly impressed with the glory of France, since that is doubtless one of the objects of the celebration. There are also fireworks at the harbour, with set-pieces imitating the designs of the Tunisian stamps. Loud were the ejaculations of wonder and admiration called forth by new and complicated patterns of rockets and catherine-wheels.

Another attraction of modern Tunis is the public park, known as the Belvedere, which lies on a hill to the east of the town, and which can be reached by electric tram in about ten minutes. There is a big casino with a large terrace on which one may take one's dinner on hot summer evenings and enjoy the view of the Lake

of Tunis, with the beautiful two-horned mountain of Bou-Cornein in the distance. The position being fairly high, one also has the benefit of any breeze which happens to exist; but it must be admitted that this is sometimes a mixed pleasure, for in the summer the shallow water of the lake recedes, leaving masses of seaweed on the shore, which, rotting in the hot sun, sends forth an odour very unpleasant to the nose, though the inhabitants declare that it is bracing and beneficial to the constitution. This may or may not be so, but the smell, if one is ignorant of the cause, is very alarming, and I have known English visitors who have hurriedly left Tunis on its account. The casino also boasts of a salle des petits chevaux, a baccarat-table, and a café-chantant; but it is not opened till June, when the town casino, under the same management, is closed.

The grounds of the park are well laid out, and there are flowering shrubs of all kinds, but a rather sad absence of trees, even of a youthful nature. The view from the top is superb, though too panoramic for pictorial representation. There is also a very elegant little loggia or pavilion, with decorations in stucco, elaborately carved in the Arab style.

A French town may always be counted on for providing attractive cafés, and Tunis is no exception

to the rule. The most alluring is perhaps the Café du Casino, the wide terrace of which is raised about 10 feet from the ground, so that one has an excellent view of all the varied life, Arab and European, which is constantly passing to and fro. A very good band plays twice a day. At six o'clock there is what is called an "apéritif" concert. It is the hour consecrated by almost universal custom to the stimulus of absinthe and "amer Picon"; and while enjoying the strains of the music and the pleasant effects of the "apéritif," one may at the same time study the latest French creations in blouses and toques, and contrast Western finery with that of an occasional Arab or Tunisian Jew, arrayed in pink silk embroidered with violet, or apple-green embroidered with white.

The programme of the concert always includes a long selection from one of the well-known operas, and it is interesting to note how large a crowd of poor Italians collects in the street below the café during this performance, listening intently to every note, and at the end recording their approval or dissatisfaction by applause or silence. We English sometimes pretend that, as a nation, we are genuine lovers of music; but can one imagine an English crowd of the lowest class standing in the street outside a concert hall, and listening, silently and intently, for half an hour to a fantasia or an opera?

Here and there ragged little Arab urchins, barefooted and sadly in need of a bath, dart in and out with newspapers for sale; while aged ruffians, turbaned and dignified, tempt you to buy from their huge baskets of sumptuous and luscious roses—so beautiful and so cheap, but also, alas! so short-lived that they rarely last over the day on which they are bought.

The Arabs, who have a passion for scents, have a curious fashion of detaching strong-smelling flowers, such as jasmine and orange-blossom, from their natural stalks, and spearing them with grass of a special kind, thin and stiff as wire. A score of such blossoms are then bound together in a compact mass, the size of a large carnation. In this way they procure a maximum of scent in a small compass, and the bouquet is alternately held to the nose or thrust beneath the turban, so that it dangles over the cheek.

The Arab is devoted to flowers. The humblest little courtyard will have its meanness redeemed by a few pots of geraniums and roses, arranged under the protecting shade of the traditional and ever-present fig-tree, and even where water is scarce and very precious these will not be deprived of their nightly drink. The most necessitous beggar is never too poor to spend two sous on a nosegay with which to adorn his cheek, and at the same time

satisfy his thirst for scent. I remember visiting, without any prearrangement, the modest little house of a guide who was contentedly serving me for the pittance of a franc and a half the day, and finding his little sitting-room quite gay with cut roses. Outside the cafés it is quite a common thing to see a beautiful flowering plant in the centre of a group of figures, kneeling or squatting on grass mats, and the reverent attention with which they sometimes seem to regard it almost suggests worship.

Perhaps to contemplate the glory of a perfect rose—so sumptuous in colour, so generous in form, so soft to touch, and so sweet to smell—assists the orthodox Moslem to dream of that paradise from which his religion does not exclude the enjoyment of sensuous delights. Be this as it may, the fondness of the Arab for flowers of all kinds, and especially for those with a powerful scent, is one of his most obvious characteristics. It is a thoroughly Oriental trait, and was conspicuous in the social life of the ancient Egyptian, from whom perhaps it may have been transmitted. Mr. Arthur Weigall says of the latter: "At all times they decked themselves with flowers, and rich and poor alike breathed what they called 'the sweet north wind,' through a screen of blossoms. At their feasts and festivals each guest was presented with necklaces and crowns of lotus-flowers, and a specially selected bouquet

was carried in the hands. Constantly, as the hours passed, fresh flowers were brought to them, and the guests are shown in the tomb paintings in the act of burying their noses in the delicate petals, with an air of luxury which even the conventionalities of the draughtsman cannot hide. In the women's hair a flower was pinned, which hung down before the forehead, and a cake of ointment, concocted of some sweet-smelling unguent, was so arranged upon the head that as it slowly melted it re-perfumed the flowers. Complete wreaths of flowers were sometimes worn, and this was the custom as much in the dress of the home as in that of the feast. The common people also arrayed themselves with wreaths of lotuses at all galas and carnivals. The room in which a feast was held was lavishly decorated with flowers. Blossoms crept up the delicate pillars to the roof; garlands twined themselves around the tables and about the jars of wine; and single buds lay in every dish of food. Even the dead were decked in their tombs with a mass of flowers, as though the mourners would hide, with the living delights of the earth, the misery of the grave.

A SLIPPER-SHOP, TUNIS

CHAPTER VII

CARTHAGE

THE drive to Carthage is flat, dusty, and dull, and gives an unfair idea of the country surrounding Tunis, which in other directions has much classical charm. Gently undulating slopes, ancient olive-trees, purple mountains and vistas of an azure sea, are its characteristics, all of which are conspicuous by their absence on the road to Carthage.

From the point of view of the hotel guide and concierge the carriage route has its advantage, but to the visitor the train saves much time and fatigue; while for those who wish to avoid all walking, carriages can generally be hired at Carthage Station. From the railway there is a delightful view of the whole Bay of Tunis, seen across a stretch of yellow sand, dappled here and there by clumps of grey grass and clusters of poppies or asphodel. To the right lies the two-horned mountain above Hammam Lif, while beyond is Zagouan, from whence Carthage drew water by means of the great aqueducts which

to-day supply Tunis with that foremost necessity of a healthy town.

I remember that on one of my journeys to Carthage the air was thick with millions of fluttering locusts, so large and so yellow that they might almost have been young canaries. The locusts are a terrible scourge to the country, but descending through the air with the irregular, uncertain movement of huge snowflakes, they presented a strange and beautiful spectacle.

There is so much which is attractive on the side of the sea that there is no time for more than an occasional glance inland, where Arabs are reaping the corn, and Bedouin encampments, with their invariable accompaniments of camels and donkeys, give a touch of interest to a stretch of somewhat arid country.

Before this book is published, visitors to Tunis will doubtless have the option of a third route. An electric railway is in the process of construction, which will cross the Lake of Tunis to La Goulette, and from thence be continued to Carthage and La Marsa. This will be a great convenience and a very considerable saving of time; but, alas! there is little doubt that surburban villas will spring up like mushrooms all over the hallowed ground of the ancient Byrsa.

It is only in the light of history and archæo-

logical research that Carthage is interesting. To the savant she offers rich opportunity for observation, conjecture and reflection; but to the mere physical eye of the artist she is indeed a barren wilderness. Some fine distant mountains and a few wild flowers are all that she can give him. For the rest, she is nothing but a bare, dusty, shadeless, unattractive mound, surmounted by an ugly modern Gothic cathedral and an equally hideous monastery, while here and there a squalid restaurant or a modern villa arrests attention by its aggressive whiteness.

To the eye of the archæologist she presents a very different picture. He can stand with his back to the cathedral of St. Louis and reconstruct from the two insignificant lakes which lie below him the famous military and commercial ports of the Carthaginians. Appian tells us they were so planned that ships could pass from one to the other, though only from the commercial port was there an opening to the sea. This exit was 70 feet wide, and was guarded by chains of iron.

In the centre of the inner or military port there was an island surrounded by large docks, and there was a similar arrangement of docks round the outer edge. They formed, as it were, a series of stalls, and provided accommodation for 220 vessels. Behind each stall there was a building for the

storage of rigging, etc., and in front two Ionic columns, which gave the appearance of a continuous portico.

The architectural effect must have been very imposing, as the scale of the harbour was vastly larger than the poor little pools of to-day would indicate. Indeed, Monsieur Beulé has calculated that the commercial port nearly equalled in size the old port of Marseilles, which could accommodate 1,100 vessels of a much larger size than the Carthaginian craft.

It was outside these ports that Scipio constructed his famous dike, 96 feet wide at its base and 24 feet wide at the top, with which he completed the blockade of the city, and on which he placed his battering-rams. It was here, at a point to the left where, owing to the depth of water and exposure to wind, Scipio had been unable to continue his dike, that the Carthaginians, with the energy of despair, made a new exit, through which slowly, one by one, they were able to put out their ships, to the astonishment and dismay of the Romans.

But of the many historic scenes recalled by these limpid waters, surely the most dramatic took place in the still darkness of night, when the Carthaginians, having brought their ships into the vicinity of the Roman dike, stripped themselves naked, and, silently wading to the deadly battering-rams,

lighted their torches to set fire to these engines of destruction which had threatened to annihilate them. The Romans, though completely taken by surprise, lost little time in responding to the attack, inflicting, with sword and javelin, horrible wounds on the unprotected bodies of their antagonists. Yet many were so demoralized by the desperate valour of the enemy, that Scipio was afterwards obliged to maintain the discipline of his army by putting to death those who from terror had failed him.

I tried to picture that tragic scene. The vast blue, luminous, star-studded sky of southern night; the dark water, flashing a hundred reflections from every flaming torch; across the bay the two-horned mountain of Hammam Lif, dimly visible, silent, yet aware; the naked forms of the Carthaginians, struggling, against fearful odds, to wrest from the closing grip of Rome the honour and freedom of their country, determined, at the worst, to sell their lives as dearly as they could.

When all was over, and the spirits of the slain had left this earth, while their bodies floated on the water, then night gave way to dawn. The stars, which had twinkled in callous merriment at this drama of human passion and ambition, vanished before the rising sun, as he flushed with rosy tints the stately form of Bou-Cornein. Red-winged flamingos swept across the sky, repeating, in a

deeper note, the colour of the mountain; small birds sang and chattered from the olive twigs; while a thousand wild-flowers unfolded their dewy petals to welcome the King of Light. All, save man and the work of man, was just as it is to-day.

Everything save man and his achievement. But what an achievement! and how it has passed away like wind! A city of 700,000 inhabitants, the most magnificent and powerful in the world, the successful rival of Rome; the capital of a nation which owned the whole of the north coast of Africa from Tripoli to Tangier, the Canary Isles, half of Spain, and all the islands of the Mediterranean save one small corner of Sicily—a nation which, matchless in her knowledge of the art of navigation, was for centuries the undisputed mistress of the sea, sending her intrepid mariners and merchants eastward as far as Syria, southward as far as Senegal, and westward as far as Britain.

And of this great civilization, and of the powerful, enterprising, intellectual people who created it, nothing remains; while of their splendid metropolis, the little lakes which were her ports, and a few ruined cisterns inhabited by squalid Bedouins, alone survive.

I turned from the panoramic view of the ancient Byrsa and entered the cathedral of St. Louis. It was pleasant to leave the hot glare of the sun,

and to rest in the cool, lofty church. A Mass was being celebrated and some thirty worshippers were present. I chose a seat in a dark corner at the extreme end of the nave and gave myself up to further thoughts of the past.

I listened to the intoning of the service, to the tinkling of the bell, and watched the White Fathers as they made their obeisances and genuflections, prostrating themselves before a great unseen Power. I looked at the lighted candles, the swinging censers, and the costly vestments, wondering if possibly something of this ornate ritual might not owe its origin, or may not also have existed, in the services held by the Carthaginians on this very spot 500 years before Christ.

Do not all religions owe much to their predecessors? Christianity was founded on Judaism, and the Carthaginians were a Semitic race. The gods and goddesses of the Phœnicians were adopted under other names by the Romans, and it is even held by some that the importance ultimately given by the Church to the Virgin Mary was a concession to the inherited needs of converts whose former creeds had provided them with some embodiment of womanly sympathy.

But if, indeed, any minor details of ancient ceremonial remain, the attributes of the Divinity worshipped by the pious White Fathers, of the

Christ who said, "Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not," present a startling contrast to those of the horrible Baal-Moloch who "rejoiced in human sacrifice and parents' tears."

The Carthaginians worshipped many gods, but acknowledged the supreme importance of three above all others. They were the terrible Baal-Moloch, Tanit the Virgin of the Moon, and Eschmoun.

To bribe the favour and appease the wrath of Baal, hundreds of infants and young children were annually sacrificed at his shrine, and in time of war, or on the occasion of any particular event or crisis, additional victims were immolated. The launching, for instance, of a new warship was always such an occasion, and it made the ceremony still more tragic that the presence of the mothers was enforced, and any display of natural emotion on their part was punished by public chastisements. During a conflict with the Greeks in Sicily, when Agathocles made successful raids on Sousse, Tunis, and many minor towns and villages in the vicinity of Carthage, they hastened to appease the terrible god who had permitted this disaster to befall them by sacrificing 200 children chosen from the most noble and illustrious families.

In his temple this sanguinary deity was represented by a colossal bronze statue, whose arms were

THE PUNIC PORTS OF CARTHAGE

extended, and the palms of whose hands turned upwards, as if inviting his children to a fatherly caress; but no sooner was the infant held in his embrace than, by a mechanical contrivance, his arms were lowered and the victim fell into the furnace beneath that another might swiftly take its place.

I left the cathedral of St. Louis to make a closer acquaintance of the historic ports, which are undoubtedly the most interesting relic of ancient Carthage. I engaged a small Arab urchin to carry my painting traps, in the faint hope that something pictorial might present itself; but as I descended the hope grew fainter, and I soon knew that it had been entirely vain. We took a bee-line, working our way over coarse stubble, wild-flowers, and thistles; but neither thistles nor stubble caused any concern to the barefooted, barelegged youngster, who seemed as happy and comfortable as if he had been tripping on soft moss. We crossed the rails of the new electric railway, too probably the prelude to a third Carthage composed of tourists' hotels and summer villas, and passing by a small Bedouin encampment where I gained immediate popularity by distributing a dozen cigarettes, came down to the edge of the old military port of Punic Carthage.

The harbours were made by man, and have retained their artificial and symmetrical outline, conforming to the description given by Appian.

The island in the centre, on which the admiral lived and from which he directed naval operations, is quite intact, though a narrow causeway now connects it with the mainland. At the time of my visit, excavations were being conducted and promised to be of extreme interest, giving a complete plan of the old building. If the foundations of the admiral's pavilion still exist, there seems no reason why one should despair of finding those of the boat-houses.

The water of the lakes is now very shallow, and their extent must have been far greater than at present. On the side nearest the sea there is just visible a slight depression of the sand, which may possibly mark the fresh opening made so skilfully at the time of Scipio's siege. Along the seashore—and, indeed, in every direction—masses of ancient masonry are visible, though possibly these are remains of Roman Carthage.

THE ROMAN THEATRE

The Roman Theatre is almost the only ruin at Carthage which gives adequate assistance to the unlearned mind in its effort to picture the past. The general plan of the building is quite clear, and small portions of the original marble seating remain, just sufficient to enable one to imagine the rest. The position of the stage, with its exits, is clearly

RUINS OF THE ROMAN THEATRE, CARTHAGE

marked, and the arena is strewn with exquisitely carved Corinthian capitals, portions of rich cornices, and sections of columns in rare marbles, all testifying to the lavish wealth of detail which graced its decorations. From the higher tiers one sees the ever-delightful mountains, with a touch of cerulean sea beneath; though whether this delicious little peep of distance was visible when the building was complete is more than doubtful. Those old-world play-goers did not care to have their attention distracted from the sayings and doings of the actors on the stage, and in choosing the site of this theatre the beauty of the distance had no more to do with its selection than at Taormina, where the far-away vista of Etna is still more lovely.

It may be pointed out that at the date when Carthage enjoyed a Roman revival of its former greatness, legitimate drama had lost much of its popular favour and had been largely superseded by the pantomime. The Roman pantomime differed considerably from ours, and is thus described by a Latin author: "One actor only, the pantomime, appeared on the scene, who was supported by a choir and orchestra. The choir sang the words ('canticum') and the actor translated them by his gestures. The pantomime arrived on the stage, and, saluting the public, announced by the gestures of his hand the subject which he was going to treat,

and then, as the choir sang the words, he interpreted them by his movements. He quarrels, he plays, he loves, he is carried away, he is calm, he is agitated; he gives clearness and contrast to every sentiment; he reveals everything with marvellous beauty; he speaks with his whole body. How astonishing," adds the writer, "is this art, which, while the mouth remains closed, gives to every word its whole meaning!"

Other reasons also were accountable for the great popularity of the pantomime. The audience of the theatre was enormous, and embraced a large proportion of the lower class, many of whom could speak and understand little or no Latin. It was always the policy of the Romans to buy popularity by the lavish magnificence of their public performances, and a custom seems to have arisen of showering down on the audience presents of all kinds at the end of the performance. "Fruits, dates, apples, nuts, meats, pastries, and pieces of money specially struck for the occasion, were thrown from above, falling like hail on the audience. Hosts of rare birds, also, obscured the daylight as they descended in thousands from the sky. The presents were so numerous that they could not be held in the hands, but were fastened in the folds of the tunics."

Such is the description given by Seneca of theatrical fêtes in the time of Nero, and he adds

that when the Emperor found that the poorer classes, being the rougher and having no prejudice against a free fight, succeeded in getting nearly everything, he distributed to the senators and nobles tickets which could afterwards be exchanged for special gifts. This practice of bestowing gifts on the audience seems to have come into vogue as a development of the custom of allowing the needy to carry away the carcasses of beasts killed in the arena of the amphitheatre.

The foundations of a temple dedicated to Saturn are fairly comprehensible on the plateau above the theatre, and there are innumerable remnants of massive walls and tunnels, the latter being, no doubt, cisterns or conduits. A few hundred yards farther on, in the direction of the village of Sidi-Bou-Said, is the basilica of Damous-el-Karita, so called because that is the name of the ground in which it lay buried when it was discovered by the learned and indefatigable Père Delattre a few years since. It is very large, measuring 65 metres in length and 45 metres in width, and it had four aisles on either side of the wide central nave. At the east end there was a large semicircular apse, which was open to the sky but had a covered colonnade. It contained also a baptistery, several chapels and vestries, and a secondary basilica. All these details seem quite simple when explained by Père Delattre's admirable

plan, but without it the confused masses of crumbled masonry and broken pillars have little meaning to the average tourist.

So large is its area that Père Delattre thinks it may be the Basilica Major, in which it is recorded that the bodies of SS. Perpetua and Felicitas were interred. The fact that over 14,000 Christian epitaphs were found here helps to give some idea of its importance. Adjoining the basilica is the modern French cemetery, where many simple black wooden crosses mark the graves of the White Fathers.

The view from this point is interesting, as, looking westward, one is able to realize the shape of the peninsula, which in the days of the Carthaginians had such a much narrower neck than it has now. Sidi-bou-Said, nestling closely to the hill like a white flowering creeper, sparkles in the sun ; while scattered here and there are a few olive-trees, pleasant to eyes which have looked in vain for an oasis of shade on the barren mound of Byrsa.

Not very far away are the Roman cisterns. They have been restored, and supply La Goulette, La Marsa, and all the neighbouring villages with the clear, fresh water of *Z*agouan, brought in the great aqueduct constructed more than 2,000 years ago. " Like the bleached vertebræ of some gigantic serpent," it stretches across the plain for a distance

of 60 miles, its arches often rising to the height of 60 feet, and sometimes to 125 feet. The volume of water conveyed is 7,000,000 gallons per day, or 81 gallons per second.

As stupendous engineering feats, the great Roman aqueducts command universal admiration. The huge piers and arches which support the conduit and carry volumes of water for enormous distances show on the part of their builders a perfect mastery over the difficulties of obtaining a gradual change of level, solidity of foundation, and other engineering problems. They have withstood the ravages of time for upwards of 2,000 years with such success that, with but slight repair, they still fulfil their purpose.

But admiration for their grandeur is often qualified by a sneer at the apparently superfluous labour of carrying the water overhead when it could so much more easily have been conveyed in closed pipes underground, and it is foolishly assumed that the choice of the former method was made in ignorance of the fact that water finds its own level. On this subject the late Professor Middleton says :

"The Romans were thoroughly acquainted with the simple hydraulic law that water in a closed pipe finds its own level, or, as Pliny puts it, 'subit altitudinem exortus sui,' and they took advantage of this fact by constructing pipes reaching to the tops

of lofty fountains, and rising mains to supply the upper rooms of houses, which branched off right and left from a main pipe laid under the pavement of the streets. It was not, therefore, in ignorance of the law of Nature that they constructed water-channels borne on long lines of arches, but simply because it was the most economical way to bring a large supply of water from a distance. Even in recent times the method has been resorted to with advantage, as in the case of the great Croton Aqueduct, 40 miles long, which supplies New York City, constructed between 1837 and 1842 — and this in spite of modern improvements in iron-casting, which allows iron pipes to be made of great strength and capacity, whereas the Roman pipes had to be made of the more costly and weaker lead, or in places of special pressure of the still more expensive bronze. The calcareous deposit with which water from the neighbourhood of Rome so rapidly incrusts pipes and water-channels made it doubly convenient to employ channels which were always readily accessible, and could be cleaned out without any difficulty."

The cisterns, which strike one as being enormous, are 135 metres in length and 37 metres wide. There are eighteen of them, and they contain 30,000 cubic metres of water.

Monsieur Beulé, a great authority on these matters,

SIDE-WALK IN THE SOUK-DES-ÉTOFFES, TUNIS

Graham Petrie

says that the plan of the cisterns is undoubtedly Punic, and thinks that the Romans copied Punic cisterns which had been destroyed. Mr. Bosworth Smith believes that they were merely repaired by the Romans. When the cisterns were being cleaned the arm of a colossal marble statue was found, which measured nearly 4 feet in circumference.

These huge reservoirs are usually spoken of as the "small cisterns," to distinguish them from the still larger ones of La Malga, now in a ruinous condition but well worth a visit.

Just opposite is the Hôtel des Citernes, a dear little one-storied building, embowered in masses of pink, mauve, and blood-red geraniums. So thick were the blossoms that hardly any leaves were visible; but it is right to add that I am speaking of the month of June—a time of year when most English travellers have long since returned to their Mother Country, and are enjoying the hail-storms, east winds, and fireside warmth of London. I have never seen geraniums grow in such profusion, except, perhaps, in the Riviera, and there also in the month of June. Every cottage seemed to be "en fête" with them, and the blueness of the shadows which they cast on the whitewashed walls was almost as great a joy as the radiant colour of the flowers themselves.

TUNIS

THE ROMAN AMPHITHEATRE

The ruins of the amphitheatre lie quite close to La Malga and the old railway-station. Its general plan—which is, of course, elliptical—is clearly marked. Some of the underground water-ducts are visible, and here and there round the sides some arches suggest the vaulting of the substructure which carried the tiers of seats for the spectators; but, as is always the case at Carthage, much—very much—has to be left to conjecture. The amphitheatre is mentioned in the writings of an Arab author of the Middle Ages, who states that it had five tiers of arches, enriched with columns and sculpture, and that there was then nothing in the whole universe which could be compared to it!

In the centre of this arena Cardinal Lavigerie has erected a white stone pillar, surmounted by a cross, to the memory of the numerous martyrs who here suffered death, and also a small chapel to the honour of SS. Perpetua, Felicitas, Revocatus, Saturninus, and Secundulus. Its association with the tragic end of these heroic sufferers gives to the amphitheatre its greatest interest. The story is so pathetic and reflects so much light on the ardent faith and unflinching fortitude of the early Christians, that I venture to quote it at some length.

It was in the year A.D. 202 that Felicitas, Revo-

catus, Saturninus, Secundulus, and Vivia Perpetua were arrested for avowing the abhorred faith. Perpetua was a young woman of aristocratic birth, belonging to a rich and powerful family. She was twenty-two years old, and had a young child at her breast. Felicitas was enceinte. Perpetua wrote with her own hand a portion of the story of their martyrdom.

"As my father," she relates, "because of his affection, tried to persuade me to renounce my faith, I said to him: 'My father, do you see that vase on the ground?' 'Yes,' he replied. 'Can one give it any other name?' 'No,' he said. 'Neither,' said I, 'can I call myself anything but what I am—a Christian.'

"A few days afterwards we were put into prison. I was frightened, for I had never known such darkness. Oh, what never-ending days! what heat! One was suffocated by the mob, and some of the soldiers pushed us brutally. Also I was consumed with fright for my child. But the officials, Tertius and Pompone, assisted us, and, by paying silver, we were allowed to pass to a less crowded part of the prison. We left the dungeon, and I gave milk to my child, who was dying of hunger.

"We were placed on a kind of scaffold before the judge, who, when it came to my turn, joined

with my father, and said: 'What! will neither the grey hairs of a father nor the tender innocence of a child, whom your death will leave an orphan, move you?' As my father attempted to drag me from the scaffold the judge commanded him to be beaten off, and a blow was given with a stick, which I felt as much as if I had been struck myself, so grieved was I to see my father thus treated in his old age. The judge pronounced our sentence, by which we were condemned to be exposed to wild beasts. We then joyfully returned to our prison, and, as my infant had been used to my breast, I sent Pompian, the deacon, to demand him of my father, who refused to send him. And God so ordained that the child no longer required to suck; nor did my milk incommode me.

"On the day of the public show my father came to find me out, overwhelmed with sorrow. He tore his beard, threw himself prostrate on the ground, and cursed his years, till I was ready to die to see my father in so deplorable a condition.

"Felicitas was eight months gone with child, and, as the day of the shows approached, was inconsolable, lest she should not be brought to bed before it came, fearing that her martyrdom would be deferred on that account, because women with child were not allowed to be executed before they were delivered. Therefore she and her companions

NOON, TUNIS

prayed that the child might be born in good time. Their prayer was immediately answered, and the child was adopted by a Christian woman."

A contemporary but anonymous writer here continues the history:

"The day of their triumph being come, they went out of the prison to the amphitheatre. Joy sparkled in their eyes and appeared in all their gestures and words. When they came to the gate of the amphitheatre the guards would have given them, according to custom, the superstitious habits with which they adorned such as appeared at these sights—for the men a red mantle, which was the habit of the priests of Saturn; for the women a little fillet round the head, by which the priestesses of Ceres were known. The martyrs rejected these adulterous ceremonies, and by the mouth of Perpetua said that they came thither of their own accord, on the promise that they should not be forced to anything contrary to their religion. The tribune then consented that they might appear in the amphitheatre habited as they were.

"Revocatus was immediately despatched by a bear. Saturnine was attacked first by a leopard and then by a bear. Afterwards he was exposed to a wild-boar, but the beast refused to touch him, though he killed the keeper. Then they tied him near a bear, but that beast came not out of his

lodge. So that Saturnine, being sound and not hurt, was called upon for a second encounter. This gave him the opportunity of speaking to Pudens, the gaoler that had been converted. The martyr encouraged him to constancy in the faith, and said to him : 'You see that I have not yet been hurt by any beast. Believe, then, steadfastly in Christ. I am going where you will see a leopard with one bite take away my life.' It happened so, for a leopard, being let out upon him, covered him all over with blood, whereupon the people, jeering, cried out: 'He is well baptized.' The martyr dipped his ring in his wound and gave it to Pudens as a pledge of faith. He then fell down dead.

"In the meantime Perpetua and Felicitas had been exposed to a wild cow. Perpetua was first attacked, and the cow having tossed her up, fell on her back. Getting up, she perceived Felicitas on the ground, much hurt by a toss of the cow, so she helped her to rise. They stood together, expecting another assault; but the people crying out that it was enough, they were led to the gate Sanavivaria, where those that were not killed by the beasts were despatched at the end of the shows by the 'confectores.'

"All the martyrs were now brought to the place of butchery; but the people, not yet satisfied with

beholding blood, cried out to have them brought out into the middle of the amphitheatre, that they might see the last blow. Upon this some of the martyrs rose up, and, giving one another the kiss of peace, went of their own account into the middle of the arena. Others were despatched, without speaking or stirring, at the place they were in.

"St. Perpetua fell into the hands of a very timorous and unskilful apprentice, who gave her many slight wounds, making her suffer a long time. One badly directed stroke caused her to utter a cry of anguish; yet finally she had the courage to steady the point of the young gladiator's trembling sword and guide it to her throat."

Quite lately Père Delattre has found in the ruins of a vast Christian cemetery near La Marsu a stone in fragments, with the names of these martyrs graven on it. If it is not their actual tombstone, it is certainly a memorial of very early date.

.....NT MARTY..*r*.....
† SATVRVS SATVR*ninus*
† REBOCATVS *Secundulus*
† FELICIT PER*petua*

I cannot allude to all the ruins of Carthage, for I have no time to dwell on them, and though for the most part they present little more to the eye than a confused ground plan, yet, teeming with associations,

they refuse to be dismissed in a few bald lines. Nor can I embark on an appreciation of the museum of the White Fathers, which, demanding a volume to itself, has happily met with its deserts from the able pen of Miss Mabel Moore in her scholarly book, " Carthage of the Phœnicians."

CHAPTER VIII

Half-Day Excursions from Tunis

ARIANA

In addition to Carthage, which is, of course, of paramount interest, there are many places near Tunis to which pleasant half-day excursions may be made. Among them is the semi-Jewish village of Ariana, which we had the good fortune to visit on the eve of the Passover.

The electric tramway for Ariana starts at each half-hour—an important thing to know, as the concierge of your hotel is likely to be a newly arrived Swiss, knowing nothing of these matters, and he may assure you, as ours assured us, that it runs every five minutes.

Passing the Belvedere Gardens, gay with mimosa in fullest blossom, the air heavy with its scent, we were soon in the real country, wooded with giant olives, which had surely lived a thousand years. Few trees, if any, have the individuality of the

olive, or express a character so human. Dignity, ambition, courage, and victory; hatred, cunning, fear, and failure—every passion and emotion seems to be delineated on their boughs. But for the moment we must hurry on to Ariana, though at some future time I hope we may return for a stroll beneath these olives, and, passing over carpets of wild-flowers, find our way to the crest of the hill, to look down on a white city framed by purple mountains and an azure sea.

Alighting from the tram, a hundred yards brought us to the little town. At each corner of the street there was an Arab café, neither looking specially attractive from the outside. Peering idly into one of them, we found a vaulted room with several recesses, and at the farther end a fascinating tiled fireplace, in the colour-scheme of which blue was the predominant note. Here the coffee cook was extremely busy with all the picturesque paraphernalia of his art.

It was evidently the fashionable hour for the social beverage, and the room was overflowing, yet fresh chairs were instantly found and placed at our service with that charming courtesy which the Arab never fails to show in his home, his café, or his shop. Simple shepherds and farmers, who had come into the town to sell their lambs to the Jews for the forthcoming feast, their manners showed a perfec-

THE MOSQUE OF SIDI-BOU-SAID, NEAR CARTHAGE

ARCHIVE COPY

tion of taste to which the European rarely attains, and they acknowledged our intrusion with a friendly glance of recognition, free from all inquisitive curiosity. On the walls there were framed texts from the Koran, while from the roof hung canary-cages, whose inmates, trilling a soprano melody, mingled their high notes with the low hum of Arab voices.

These bronzed, swarthy men, robed in a simple white burnous, made a very satisfying picture; and it was something of a shock to glance through the open door into the little square, where well-to-do Jews were disporting themselves in their gaudiest robes, while their wives waddled about in voluminous trousers and a white satin "haik," deliberately arranged to emphasize their astounding development of adipose tissue. It was like turning from a rich, sombre old master to a vulgar chromolithograph, or from a harmonious water-colour to a bad reproduction by the three-colour photographic process.

Yet once out in the sun, we were able to enjoy the gay display of Jewish finery, and wondered if the old Phœnicians, who were of Semitic blood, aired themselves and their gauds in similar fashion 3,000 years ago.

At the other end of the little street we came across a group of shepherds discussing the points of their lambs. It was another harmony in various

tones of brown, buff, ivory, and white, the creamy tone of the woollen burnous being the principal note, with here and there a touch of cool white given by the cotton "haik," which is worn under the burnous, but is brought across the turban and round the neck. Plaster walls repeated these delicate shades, and a cool white sky, with one or two graceful mimosa-trees against it, completed a delightful and very Biblical picture. There is one mosque, with a simple but effective minaret, and we noted a very archaic well, which was being worked by an aged camel. Certainly there is nothing of momentous interest in Ariana, but it is easily and pleasantly reached, and we far from regretted our visit to it.

THE JEWISH CEMETERY

On Fridays, and on the last day of the month, the Tunisian Jews visit the graves of their relations, and lament over them. The sight is so strange, and perhaps unique, that it is worth the fatigue of a short but bone-shaking drive to see it. At first thought it seems an unwarrantable impertinence, and a callous one, to intrude oneself as a witness of the private grief of others, with no better excuse than that of idle curiosity. But the Jew does not share the Arab's great appreciation of privacy in everything that pertains to his religion

and family life; he is very complacent and friendly, and quite pleased that Christians should enter his synagogues and witness his weddings and funerals. He might even welcome the Arab, too, could the self-respecting follower of the Prophet ever demean himself by displaying an interest in the customs and ceremonies of those outside his own religious pale, which is, of course, inconceivable.

The cemetery is about a mile and a half outside the town, and the road is dusty and shadeless; but the glare of the road is as nothing compared to the glare of the cemetery.

An avenue of half-starved acacia-trees leads from the entrance to the chapel, a bare room with trestles in the centre and some wooden forms round the walls, but otherwise quite destitute of furniture or decoration.

On either side of the avenue lie acres of white marble slabs, raised a foot from the ground. They are all on the same level, and of the same shape and area, so that only here and there, where a few strenuous weeds have forced their heads between the flagstones, does one see any "accent" on this huge monotonous marble dais. Of course I mean no permanent accent, for of accents temporary, but emphatic, there are many in the form of portly Jewesses, who rock themselves as they loudly proclaim their misery and woe, or prostrate their un-

wieldy figures in silent but not less effective expression of utter abandonment and inconsolable grief.

Such a universal display of suffering is at first very heartrending, but one soon realizes that, though some of the grief is doubtless genuine, this violent uncontrolled assertion of it is traditional and conventional. Noisy lamentations, with wailing and gnashing of teeth, are considered good form; but one suspects that those who wail most loudly are not always the saddest at heart.

But if much of the misery was artificial and hysterical, the simulation was very real—tears rained over swollen faces; lips were pressed with passionate fervour on the hard, unresponsive marble; hands were clenched and arms outstretched in attitudes of piteous entreaty, and the air was full of piercing cries and broken sobs.

Strange, in contrast to all this hysteria, was the matter-of-fact behaviour of the professional readers or comforters, who, dressed in a coloured "gandouras," stood beside the lamentators, and read, or rather intoned, with the utmost speed passages from Holy Scripture, their one object being to get through their business as quickly as possible.

A very large proportion of the mourners were women; but many men and children were also present, though they were far less demonstrative in

A TYPICAL STREET, TUNIS

their display of emotion than the women. Most of the latter wore the old-fashioned pointed head-dress, shaped somewhat like a fool's cap, but worn at the back of the head, from which hung the white silk "haik," which draped nearly the whole figure.

This head-dress is becoming somewhat obsolete, and one rarely sees it in the town. Also it was interesting to see many examples of the tight trousers or drawers, which have now been generally superseded by the far more becoming voluminous white satin trousers. The old-fashioned pattern fitted very tightly to the leg, invariably a fat one, and the effect was more comic than beautiful, especially when the material is white. Those I noticed at the cemetery were all black, with the exception of a few of dark purple, and nearly all were richly embroidered with gold.

As the flat tombstones all touched each other, there were, of course, no paths, and visitors passed over the slabs, slippers in hand. I noticed one elderly dame carrying a silk Oriental rug, which she carefully spread on the marble before commencing to indulge in the luxury of woe. Whether this was the survival of an obsolete custom, or whether this particular lady suffered from rheumatic tendencies and wished to take precautions against their possible development, I cannot tell.

There is bound to be a reaction to indulgence in

paroxysms of grief, and I was pleased to notice that a Tunisian Jewish cemetery offers no exception to the general rule. Here and there I saw quite cheerful little parties of gossipers. Faint echoes of laughter reached me more than once, and I observed that one young Jew was smoking a cigarette while chatting to his friends, though the custodian at the lodge had sternly commanded me to throw away mine.

Outside the gates a large number of carriages were waiting to take the mourners back to Tunis, for the Jewesses, with their tiny slippers only half as long as their feet, are poor pedestrians; physical exercise, moreover, would reduce their weight, and so lessen the esteem and admiration of their husbands. "Il faut suffrir pour être belle," and it was better to endure the agonies of temporary compression by sharing a carriage with three friends.

BARDO

Space does not allow me to make more than a passing allusion to the Bardo Palace, and the Alaoui Museum adjoining it. Though a couple of miles from Tunis, they are easily reached by the electric tramway, starting from the Place Bab-Souika. The palace is no longer used as a residence of the Bey, and a considerable part of the original huge building has been pulled down. The portion which remains

contains a number of large rooms and galleries, furnished in atrocious French taste; and on the walls there are many portraits of deceased Beys and historical pictures, painted, for the most part, by indifferent European artists. The museum, apart from the great interest of its collection of antiquities, is architecturally delightful. Some of the palatial halls are magnificent, but the rooms which appealed to me the most were the smaller ones, now used as an Arab museum. The collection in the larger halls embraces mosaics, statuary, bronzes, glass, and pottery of every age, but chiefly Roman, excavated in various parts of Tunisia. There are also models of the ruined remains of Roman cities in the Regency, those of Dougga being of great interest.

CHAPTER IX

Sousse (Hadrumetum)

It is the absolute duty of every visitor to Tunis to make a pilgrimage to the holy city of Kairouan, and in doing so it is convenient to break the journey and spend a night at Sousse. There is a train which starts at the hideous hour of 6 a.m., for those whose time is very limited, and another at about 2 p.m., arriving at Sousse in time for dinner. Soon after leaving Tunis one passes the village of Djebel-Djeloud. The name is very attractive, but the next stopping-place, Radès, is really more interesting, and from it one can take many charming walks. A little farther on is Hammam-Lif, sheltered beneath a high hill, with a beach on the open sea, a casino, an hotel, and numerous villas—a very popular summer resort with the townsfolk of Tunis.

A picturesque incident occurred on our journey, at the station of Grombalia. A huge crowd of Arabs had assembled on the platform, and were holding

SOUSSE (HADRUMETUM)

aloft some tattered old flags, which fluttered in the wind. Great excitement prevailed, and a large case was brought out of the luggage-van and unpacked in their midst. It proved to contain some new and beautifully embroidered banners, presented by a wealthy Arab of Tunis to the mosque of his native village. They were quickly unpacked and unfurled; a procession was formed, and to the wild, uncouth noises of an Arab band, which somewhat resembles the sound of many bagpipes, the flags were carried off to their exalted destination.

We had as a travelling companion a pleasant Frenchman, a notary of Sousse. In one respect, however, he was far from cheerful, and that was in his views about the Arab. He declared that thirty years of intimate acquaintance had failed to bring under his notice a single instance of an Arab who resisted an opportunity of enriching himself by dishonesty or crime; that gratitude, loyalty, and honour were sentiments beyond his understanding; that the only emotion which would keep him straight was fear, and the only treatment to accord him that of kicks and blows. He illustrated his dismal theories by a most depressing sequence of histories, in all of which generous treatment of the Arab had ended in robbery or murder. The picture he drew was so black and so devoid of half-tones that our credulity revolted; we felt as if

we had been harrowed by the ghastly stories of an anti-vivisectionist. We declined to believe that any class of human beings, Arabs or vivisectionists, are entirely devoid of gratitude, sympathy, and kindness. So we told ourselves that this man's views were "parti pris," that his judgment on this question was warped and biassed; and, thus soothing our harrowed nerves, we were able to look out of the window and note with friendly eyes those picturesque brown men, ploughing the earth with their patient camels, or trotting along the roads on diminutive donkeys. On other matters our fellow-traveller was a thorough-going optimist. The country, he assured us, had enormously grown in prosperity since the commencement of the French occupation, and he believed that its possibilities of further development were almost unlimited.

If Sousse cannot compete in historical interest with Carthage; if its present-day importance is insignificant compared with that of Tunis; if it never possessed the sacred distinction of Kairouan and retains less of its Oriental glamour—in its claim to antiquity it admits no rival. Founded in the ninth century B.C., under the name of Hadrumetum, it is older than Carthage, though we know that in the sixth century B.C., it took its place in the second of the zones into which the territory governed by

Carthage was divided. In 307 B.C. Agathocles laid siege to the town, and in 203 B.C. it was to Hadrumetum that Hannibal retreated after his famous defeat by Scipio. In A.D. 448 the fortifications were destroyed by the Vandals, but the inhabitants strengthened and protected their houses with so much success that they still resisted the intrusions of aggressors. In A.D. 534 it succumbed, at the order of Justinian, to the army of Belisarius, and became known at this date as Justinianopolis.

In A.D. 663 it was invaded by the Arabs, and in 689, after the defeat of the Byzantine army at Thysdrus (El-Djem), it was governed by the Khalifat of Bagdad. At the beginning of the sixteenth century it was one of the haunts of the marauding Barbarossa, and for long continued to be a home of piracy. Lastly, it was occupied by the French in 1881 without resistance.

Such is the historical record of Sousse, which, under French direction, has become one of the most busy and prosperous ports of Tunisia. It has a fine modern harbour, and, lying on the side of a steep hill, it is effectively crowned by an imposing "Kasbah," from which there is an extensive view. There is an interesting museum, with several fine Roman mosaic pavements. The arcaded "souks" are picturesque, though badly ventilated. From the

higher level of its steep streets there are some delightful views, with peeps of azure sea below. The country round is richly wooded with olive-trees, and a mile or so out of the town there are some Christian catacombs. I can think of nothing more to say of Sousse. Doubtless if one arrived there by sea, not having any other places in Tunisia, it would seem to be a peculiarly romantic and beautiful city; but its charms are eclipsed by those of other places, and its chief reason for existence, as far as the tourist is concerned, is that it serves as a convenient place at which to break the journey between Tunis and Kairouan, and also as a starting-point for an expedition to El-Djem. But we must not neglect the catacombs.

The lazy, good-for-nothing Arab loafers who, possessing a smattering of French and a knowledge of the relative positions of the sights of Sousse, style themselves guides, spare no pains in endeavouring to persuade the tourist to visit the catacombs, which, they assure him, are the most interesting and the most extensive in the world. For reasons which will appear later, I am unable to prove or disprove the truth of these assertions; but, in any case, for the visitor who has time at his command, the catacombs provide an object for an attractive drive in a two-horse carriage, for which the modest sum of two francs an hour is charged.

SOUSSE (HADRUMETUM)

The country round Sousse is richly wooded, and is a pleasant change from the barren desert which surrounds Kairouan. Skirting round the town, we passed a few villas ablaze with geraniums; hedges and pergolas absolutely covered with blossom, for the most part pink and lilac, with an occasional splash of vivid scarlet. The flowers were so thick that hardly a leaf could be seen. Wheeling round by the "Kasbah" which crowns the town, and which is used by the French as a military fort, we diverged to the left into deliciously cool olive-groves, which, on the gently undulating ground, framed with their silvery foliage ever-varying pictures of sunlight and shadow on the far-stretching plain below. Wild flowers were growing in profusion, and here and there clumps of prickly cactus, thickly sprinkled with red and yellow blossom, promised a rich banquet of prickly pears for the sweet-toothed Arab. Now and again we passed a group of Bedouin women and children, and the former, less rigorously ruled by Mrs. Grundy than their town sisters, gaily kissed their hands to us. Everything seemed happy and cheerful, and we felt ourselves well fortified to withstand any gruesome sights which might be waiting for us in the underground passages of the catacombs.

"Ecco! siamo arrivati," said the Maltese driver, as we drew up opposite a tiny cottage. Jumping

from his seat, he knocked at the door. Alas! there was no response, and, though with united force we knocked and hammered and battered at that door, our noisy demonstrations only served to enhance, by contrast, the dead silence which ensued. Evidently the custodian was away, and, as the iron gate which barred the steps leading down to the catacombs was locked, we could see nothing without him. A small tablet announced that they had been discovered by Colonel Vincent in 1888, and that, apparently, was all the information to be gleaned from my visit.

Naturally, I at once felt that my one and only desire in life was to descend into these dismal passages, where the dust of persecuted Christians has lain at peace for nearly 2,000 years. It was useless to tell myself that I had seen many catacombs, and that they bear a tiresome family resemblance to each other—such philosophic reflections in no wise diminished my annoyance.

Strolling discontentedly beneath the olive-trees some 300 yards from the faithless custodian's cottage, I saw a red turban emerge from the ground, followed by the body, black as ebony, of a huge negro. After him came a French workman, with whom I at once engaged in conversation relative to the possibility of seeing the catacombs. The custodian had returned to the town for lunch, he explained, and would perhaps be back at four

OLIVES AND BEDOUINS NEAR TUNIS

o'clock (it was then eleven)! He and the negro were busy carrying out some extended excavations, and they had just ascended by an unsafe ladder, on which he could allow no distinguished visitor to risk his valuable life. But a little palm-oil lessened his sense of responsibility for our longevity, and I left the brilliant sunshine to descend, by means of the shaky ladder, into the dark, tortuous vaults below. I had no lantern, but, by striking hundreds of matches—French matches, which never last for more than two seconds—I was able to inspect a few tombs, which seemed to be in perfect preservation, and the names and designs carved on them were quite legible. Without a lantern it was impossible to really explore the passages, but they were evidently extensive, and formed an intricate maze in which it would be very easy to lose one's way. I had no inclination to risk such an unpleasant experience, so I scaled the ladder, and, having relieved my feelings by soundly rating the Maltese coachman in my best Italian for bringing me to the catacombs at the custodian's luncheon hour, I drove back through the olives and the wild flowers to the town.

It was delicious to drink in the fresh, wholesome, scent-laden air after the dank stagnation of those subterranean vaults, yet my thoughts continually turned back to them.

I wondered if some of these sarcophagi contained the dust of early Christian martyrs, of whose heroism there are so many records. The catacombs were not to the primitive Christians merely places for the interment of their dead, to be visited occasionally from a sentiment of affection for deceased relations, a place associated with mournful regrets and dread anticipations. With a consistency which commands one's admiration, and for which it is vain to search to-day, a cemetery was to them a place in which to rejoice over the courage and steadfast belief of their martyrs, and the peace everlasting enjoyed by all those who had died in the faith. At Easter and on the anniversaries of the death of their saints, public celebrations were held, and, with magnificent assurance, these anniversaries were always spoken of as " birthdays."

In the time of St. Augustine these feasts had fallen into disrepute. Certain scandals had arisen in connection with them, and they were stopped by the bishops. Monica, St. Augustine's mother, being unaware of the new order, took to the tombs, according to her custom, a small flask of wine and a basket of fruit. This light refreshment, which she had looked forward to sharing with her friends, the custodian ordered her to leave outside the door. St. Augustine, commending the unquestioning submission of his mother on this occasion, says :

"And so, when she came to the memorials of the saints, and was forbidden by the door-keeper to carry in the cakes, bread, and wine which she had brought with her according to use, she learned that it was against the Bishop's orders, and submitted so piously and dutifully that I myself wondered to see how willingly she renounced her own practice rather than dispute his commands. For her spirit was not deafened by sottish cravings, nor did the love of wine provoke her to hate the truth, as is the case with too many, both men and women, whose gorge rises at the hymn of temperance and at a cup of water. But she, though she brought a basketful of the usual viands, to be tasted by herself and then given away, never set on the table more than one little cup of wine, diluted to suit her own abstemious taste, in order that she might satisfy the requirements of her position. And if she was called upon to attend many such memorials of the dead, she carried the same little cup wherever she went, permitting her friends to take only the merest sip, so that the contents became little better than lukewarm water, because in this she sought not pleasure, but devotion.

"And so, when she learned that the illustrious preacher and godly prelate had forbidden these things to be done, even by those who did them in all sobriety, lest any occasion of excess should be

given to the intemperate, and, further, because these memorials are too like the superstitious Parentalia of the Gentiles, she willingly submitted, and in place of her basketful of the fruits of the earth she learned to bring to the memorials of the martyrs a bosom full of purer offerings, so that she might give what she could to the poor, and that the communion of the Lord's body, in imitation of whose Passion the martyrs were sacrificed and crowned, might be celebrated at the memorials in this way."

The gloom of these underground passages also recalled the mines in which the early Christians were so often condemned to work. The victims of this form of persecution often belonged to the upper classes, accustomed to luxury and ease, to whom the hardships inseparable from the working of a mine were rendered more intolerable by the brutality of the overseers. A very interesting letter from some of these unfortunate miners, in reply to one received by them from St. Cyprian, has been preserved, and runs as follows:

"VERY DEAR CYPRIAN,

"We bless you for having renewed our courage. Our limbs no longer feel the lashes of the whip, and our feet seem to be freed from their chains. Light has penetrated into the darkness of

IN THE COVERED SOUKS OF KAIROUAN

Graham Brie

our prison, these dread mountains have become smiling valleys, and the sickening smell of the lamps in the dark passages has been changed into the scent of flowers. Let us mutually help one another in our prayers, and ask God, Jesus Christ, and the holy angels to direct us in all our conduct."

Little wonder that with such examples of heroic optimism every martyrdom brought its hundred converts.

CHAPTER X

El-Djem (the Roman Thysdrus)

There is no difficulty about visiting El-Djem, as there is a daily automobile postal service between Sousse and Sfax, which, stopping half-way at El-Djem, takes passengers there in three hours. If money is of no consequence it is pleasanter to engage a motor-car, of which there are many for hire, but the charge is fifty francs instead of twelve francs fifty. If it is desired to return to Sousse the same day, the latter is the only course, as the public motor only runs once a day each way, starting from Sfax in the early morning. The special motor takes from an hour and a half to two hours.

The postal motor starts from Sousse at one o'clock, rather a hot hour in the summer-time; but I was lucky in having a grey day, the only sunless day during the past three weeks.

The one outside seat was engaged, but the inside of the omnibus was really quite comfortable, and I had only one fellow-passenger, an Arab, a native of Gabes, with a strong touch of the tar-brush about him.

He was slightly drunk, but quite amiable, and, though dressed in rags, carried, with evident pride, a large bundle wrapped in a brightly coloured handkerchief. As soon as we were well started he proceeded to undo his bundle, and lay out all his treasures on the seat. They included a new white cotton shirt, a new white calico gandoura embroidered with white thread, a handsome silk cummerbund, canary-coloured slippers, or "babouch," as they are called; and finally, a very magnificent orange-coloured silk waistcoat, richly embroidered with silk of a slightly darker shade, and with at least fifty buttons and buttonholes down the edges.

Having regarded them lovingly for some time, he proceeded to divest himself of his rags and don his finery, and in doing so displayed a torso so completely covered with tattooing that from the decorative point of view it seemed a pity to hide it, and one wondered if even from Mrs. Grundy's standpoint his nudity was not sufficiently disguised.

His fresh toilette presented no difficulties till he reached the stage of endeavouring to fasten the fifty buttons of a waistcoat which was much too small, especially on a very hot day, just after lunch. Pride feels no pain, and my friend never flinched from his self-imposed task of moulding his figure to fit his waistcoat: not even when he reached the lower half,

and deep inhalations became necessary in order to make ends meet.

The road to El-Djem is very long and somewhat monotonous, and its bee-line straightness reminded me of roads in Normandy and Brittany. For the first hour we drove through forests of olive-trees, many of which were very old, and fantastic in shape. But one can have too much of a good thing, even with aged and venerable olives, and we experienced some sense of relief when at last we emerged into open country and could see a horizon, even though the country before us was flat and rather barren.

But though the scenery was dull, we were far from feeling bored. The tremendous vibration of the motor effectively prevented us from feeling sleepy, and the little incidents of the road, though trifling enough, were full of interest to our eyes. A flock of goats, with their primitive picturesque shepherds, surely the counterpart of those who followed the same calling 3,000 years ago, would pass along the road; or, again, a party of Bedouins on their camels and donkeys, with all their worldly possessions attached thereto, representing more closely the actual scene of the Flight into Egypt than many celebrated pictures of this subject by eminent artists.

Presently we passed the old-fashioned two-horse diligence, still largely used by the Arabs on account

of its cheapness, though it takes ten hours to make the journey instead of three; but any feeling of superiority of which we might have been conscious was quickly shattered by the passing of a private "Fiat" motor-car, which must have covered the distance in considerably less than an hour and a half.

About half an hour before reaching El-Djem, the great massive pile of its amphitheatre becomes visible against the horizon, standing out with startling effect as the only object on the huge, void plain.

Though actually immense in size, its complete isolation conveys an exaggerated impression of its enormous proportions, which seem in their might to defy the possibility of extinction by time or vandalism.

To withstand the assaults of barbarians it has indeed required more than ordinary powers of resistance; for soon after the foundation of Kairouan the Berbers, who had aided the Arabs in their invasion of the country, found that their new masters were worse than the Byzantines, and revolted. Under the leadership of Queen Kakina they defeated the Arabs at Carthage, and retired to El-Djem, where, turning the amphitheatre into a fortress, they defied, for more than three years, all the efforts of Sidi Okbah to dislodge them. To render their position more secure, they devastated the country round, burning the immense forests.

Though the country round El-Djem is now almost denuded of trees, there are a few olives in the immediate vicinity of the amphitheatre and Arab village, for which the visitor is truly grateful. There is no doubt that in the time of the Romans the soil was richly cultivated, and that it is still capable of being turned to profitable account.

As the amphitheatre is said to have accommodated 70,000 spectators, and next to that of Rome was the largest in the world, the city must have been of great importance, and its population considerable. It possessed without doubt a majestic forum, a magnificent theatre, imposing public baths, and all the other great official buildings and monuments, the grandeur of which, magnificent alike in scale, in conception, in execution, and in lavish wealth of detail, gave dignity to the life of even the poorest inhabitant of a great Roman city.

To support this huge population, the country round must have been scientifically and successfully cultivated. Where now, as far as the eye can reach, there is nothing but bare, sterile earth, there were thousands of acres of ripening corn, there were forests of trees, there were lakes, there were flourishing industries and manufactures; and yet, of the great civilization which covered this prosperous corner of the earth, nothing now remains but the ruined walls of a single building.

ROMAN AMPHITHEATRE OF EL-DJEM (THYSDRUS)

EL-DJEM (THYSDRUS)

I had the good luck to see the amphitheatre by the light of a full moon, when its colossal proportions were even more imposing than they had been under the pink flush of sunset. An Arab wedding was to be celebrated that evening, and I had half promised my guide to attend it; but in the presence of that great monument of Roman culture I lost, for the moment at any rate, all sympathy for Arab ceremonies, or for the Arabs themselves.

When I looked down at their squalid hovels clustered round the base of the amphitheatre, I was filled with rage at the intrusion of these miserable shiftless fanatics, mongrel descendants of barbarians who had swept in hordes over the whole country, devastating and destroying, like armies of locusts, all with which they came into contact.

I hated their ragged picturesqueness, their marabouts, their narrow-minded superstitions. What had they achieved, these miserable usurpers? Their mosques, constructed from pillaged columns and capitals, seemed an unforgivable outrage; their graceful minarets, their fanciful decorations in carved plaster and coloured tiles, seemed mere petty prettinesses; their religion, a piecing together of previous ethical systems with the ethics left out; their fatalism, a stagnant pool, clouding their intellects with its deadly miasma. I was willing to believe all the dismal tales told to me by the French,

illustrative of their immorality, their utter lack of "mentalité," their absolute inability to understand the most elementary principles of honour or truth.

The spirits of those grand old Romans whose ashes lay mingled with the surrounding earth certainly took possession of me that night, while the great placid moon shone with apathy on the ruins of a civilization of which she had witnessed the birth, the growth, and the decay. Man may call her a dead world, but she is able to assert existence in mocking contrast to his transient handiwork.

But I must clip the wings of my fancy, lest, under lunar influence, it should soar beyond the limits of my reader's patience, and I will therefore quote from a popular and useful guide-book a few bald but not uninteresting facts about this wonderful ruin:

"This splendid monument, running from east to west, forms a long ellipsis, of which its greater axis is 489 feet, and its smaller 407 feet; its circumference is 1,200 feet. The arena is 300 feet long, and 200 feet wide. The wall is 66 feet thick, leaving galleries 60 feet wide. Above the ground were four storeys, each storey supported by sixty-four arches, separated from each other on the exterior by beautiful Corinthian capitals; but the upper storey has now disappeared. The long and high galleries,

with broad staircases which served as seats for the spectators, have nearly all been destroyed."

I read this informing passage, with a few others, as I lay in bed at my primitive little inn, before extinguishing my candle. I thought it might have a sedative effect on my excited brain ; and I felt thankful that I had not personally been compelled to measure the circumference, or count the number of arches. But the shades of the Romans still hovered round me, and although I fell asleep, it was to dream of a great festival given by the Emperor Gordian, under whose auspices the amphitheatre was constructed in A. D. 236.

I dreamed that I was a poor peasant lad, hailing from a village which lay half-way between Thysdrus (El-Djem) and Hadrumetum (Sousse), a two-days' journey on foot from either place. My father's house was at the edge of a great forest of olive-trees, which helped to attract the rain, so needful for the crops we grew on the flat plain below and which also screened us from the hot and devastating desert wind. The houses of our village were built of rough stone, unlike those wooden huts which look like boats cut in half, where live the Berbers ; or the tents of matting which the Bedouins carry about with them from place to place and which they often pitch in our forest, doing much damage to the trees by cutting them about for firewood and other

purposes. We tilled the ground, which belonged to a great Roman noble of Carthage, keeping half the money which the sale of corn and other things fetched, and sending the other half to this great lord. In the summer-time we slept in the forest, and during the winter in our stone houses. There was once a time when it was dangerous to sleep in the open country, because of the panthers and other dangerous beasts which infested it, but hundreds of them have lately been trapped, in order that they may serve to devour those impious people called Christians, who refuse to abase themselves to our protecting gods.

Strange stories sometimes reached us that these same Christians threw spells on the fierce brutes, averting in that way the natural desire and instinct of these savage creatures to bury their claws into human flesh, and tear the entrails out of the body. These rumours, together with tales which my grandfather had told me of a great festival which he had seen at Carthage when a young man, had given me a longing to see such things, and when praying to the gods, I had often added a private petition that they would allow this happiness to befall me.

When, therefore, it was made known to us that the great Emperor had ordained this festival, in his kind and fatherly forethought for his humble subjects, I persuaded my father to let me honour the

Emperor by attending it; and also, by describing from my fancy the things which I thought we should see, cajoled my cousin Corydon to come with me. This latter was no easy task, as Corydon had taken to himself a wife but two weeks before, and, being greatly enamoured, was loath to leave her.

Nevertheless, I succeeded, and I offered up thanks to the gods, and especially to the goddess Juno, she of the Moon, who perhaps sent these Christians into the world that so we might be freed from the terror of the panthers.

Of the journey I will not speak, because, though there were great crowds passing on the road, and we saw many things, wonderful and strange, yet, by comparison with those which came after, they now seem as nothing.

We reached Thysdrus at sundown, and never can I forget the sight of that great world of buildings, which, though in reality white, seemed pink and blue in the light and shadow of the low red sun. There were banners and flags of every colour floating in the gentle evening breeze, and there were tall masts and poles, coloured in stripes, from which hung wreaths and great festoons of what we mistook for flowers, but which later we discovered were but bleached and coloured leaves. There were lofty columns supporting gold statues, which shone like lanterns against the sky, but above everything towered the great arena

where the pageant was to be. My grandfather had warned us not to spend the night inside the city, lest we should be robbed; so we chose a pleasant spot under a big caruba-tree, and were about to lie down, when we heard laughter and saw a crowd of men round some lighted torches. Joining the throng, we found a beautiful young girl dancing on a small wooden platform. Her hair, black as ebony, was plaited with scarlet ribands and fastened with gold and silver chains. Her skin was white like cream, only her lips were red like the feathers of the sacred flamingo which sometimes haunts the lake near our village. She was naked to the waist, but her breasts I could not see, for they were covered by large shells of iridescent lustre, fastened by ropes of smaller shells which hung in many loops and bands.

To the rhythm of drums she moved her limbs and all the muscles of her torso with the suppleness of a kitten, but with a grace which was all her own. Though she was silent with her lips, yet she spoke with her whole body, and told me all her troubles and her pleasures, all her disappointments and her hopes. As I watched her, I could have laughed with joy and wept with sympathy. Yet even when she smiled and showed her dazzling teeth, her eyes had a lurking air of sadness, which perhaps no other could detect, so that I longed to close her eyelids and kiss the

sorrow away. She was so beautiful, so dear, so sweet, and withal so modest and so good, that I hated the crowd of men who leered at her as they applauded, and at last I felt so angry that I was obliged to leave. When I spoke to Corydon of my warm love for this girl and of how happy I should be if I could marry her, though of course I knew that such a thing could never happen, he laughed, and said such wicked things, that I could have killed him. It was not until we began to talk about the morrow and the wondrous things we were about to see that I could forgive him, and not quite even then.

Tired with our long journey, we slept soundly for a few hours; but we were up at daybreak, for the noise of the excited crowds which now passed along the road in a continuous stream, combined with the roaring of hundreds of wild beasts, would have made further sleep impossible to the veriest sluggard. The noise of the animals became louder and louder as time passed, for in order to make them fiercer, no food had been given to them for many hours.

Great excitement prevailed everywhere, and to me all was strange and wonderful. I gazed with wonderment at the dresses of the people, so gay and different from those in our village; the shops and booths in the streets and market, where things I had never imagined were exposed for sale, though

all too dear for us to buy. Strange it was, also, to hear so many people talking in words of which I could understand nothing; and this would have made me feel very lonely, if I had not had the company of Corydon. I was very glad I had persuaded him to come, and still gladder that I had not killed him the night before.

We followed the crowd to the great amphitheatre —no need to ask the way, all were passing thither. At intervals, soldiers were stationed, to clear the road for the nobles in their chariots. At last we found ourselves in our seats in the high gallery, numbered tickets having been given to us at the entrance, to avoid crowding and disorder. We were in the highest row of seats, except those occupied by the women. It is said that a new custom has arisen in Rome which allows the women to be seated with the men, but such was not the habit at Thysdrus, nor at any city except Rome. Below us lay the great marble cavea, or auditorium, now nearly full of wealthy citizens and land-owners; while in the lower seats—called the podium—the senators, magistrates, vestal virgins, the editor, and other important personages were seated, in their own portable and luxurious chairs. All were robed in the white toga, so that there should be no mixing of bright colours to arrest attention from the performance in the arena. This was told me by a man

named Burbo, who sat on my right, Corydon being on my left. Burbo was a servant in the household of Clodius. He had been in Rome and many other distant places, and he made clear to me much of what I could not otherwise have understood. He thought it far better to banish the women to the top of the seats, as by the fascination of their glances even more than by the brightness of their clothes, they distract the mind. In this I do not doubt that he was right, though I should have been well pleased if the beautiful dancing-girl, of the white skin, the coral lips, and the sad eyes, had been by my side. Eagerly I scanned the women's gallery in the vain hope of seeing her once more. Behind the women's seat there was a high wall, with open arches for ventilation, and from poles, fastened by iron brackets, hung the velaria, or awning, which shielded us from the sun. It was made of white wool with broad crimson stripes, and in its centre was a large opening, to admit more air, and to light the arena. Round this opening was a wide band of gold silk, which harmonized well with the deep blue of the sky. The velaria was kept cool by being constantly sprayed with water, so strongly scented that, closing the eyes, one could fancy oneself in an orange-garden.

In the centre of the arena there was a small oasis of palm-trees, mingled with flowering bushes, in

which Burbo told me tigers and other wild animals would probably take refuge, for a few futile moments, when being pursued by armed huntsmen, and which would also form an island when the arena was flooded for the hippopotamus and alligator hunt, one of the many aquatic items on the programme. The walls which surrounded the arena and divided it from the podium were adorned with pictures of wild beasts and portraits of famous huntsmen and gladiators, interspersed with pious invocations to the gods, and emblems to avert the evil-eye. On the top of this wall, or parapet, masses of roses, jessamine, violets, and other sweet-scented flowers were laid, which added a subtle and delicious quality to the perfume of orange-flower from the velaria.

To absorb the blood of beasts and men slain or wounded during the combats, the floor of the arena was covered with sand, sprinkled with gold and silver dust in lines and circles. These patterns gave a beautiful effect, but cost much money and were soon destroyed when the combats had begun.

Round the edge of the arena were many barred openings, from which proceeded the roars of lions, the snarls of tigers, the wails of criminals, and the chants of Christians. One opening, loftier than the others, was for the elephants, of which several were to be killed. Burbo told me that lions are now very difficult to procure, many

hundreds having been killed in the amphitheatre. Every year it is needful to penetrate further and further into the desert to find them. Of elephants no more are to be found in Africa, and they are now brought at great cost and with much difficulty from Asia with the tigers. Those who are successful in capturing lions and other formidable beasts alive win much distinction and honour, even when their birth and breed is of the humblest. Quite lately an intrepid lion-hunter, named Olimpius, died. He was a negro, black as jet. During the latter years of his life he amassed a large fortune by the sale of beasts which he had captured; and treated with great honour by all the highest families of the capital, he was also the adored hero of the populace. At his death many poets sang his praises, one of them declaring that his complexion prejudiced no one, since all the world admits the beauty of ebony; another, that sombre violet is a colour of which one never tires, since it blends harmoniously with all others.

Chatting about such things, and eating the cakes which we had brought with us, we pleasantly passed the time. Suddenly a blast of trumpets announced the pompa or procession of the gods, who, brought from the temple in triumphal cars, were accompanied by the priests in magnificent vestments.

Certainly it is right and fitting that the gods

should inaugurate the festivals which are given in their honour, and which, indeed, they themselves have sent us. Slowly the procession made its way round the arena to deafening cheers from 80,000 throats. Surely, I thought, the Christians who hear this proof of the power and might of our deities will acknowledge their supremacy, and so be saved from a bloody and fearful end. At last the circuit of the procession was completed; we privately invoked the continued protection of our special gods, who were now all taken back to their temples. Another blast from the trumpets commanded silence while the editor announced the first combat. With eager eyes and quickened pulse, we prepared ourselves to witness the victory of the strong and brave, and the death of the weak and wicked.

No one, much less an illiterate peasant lad like me, could adequately describe the marvellous things we saw during those three long days. Two hundred animals and fifty gladiators were killed each day. Every event seemed more wonderful than the last. The suspense of the moment when an infuriated lion crouched to spring on a huntsman who was struggling to balance his spear with a maimed arm, stopped the beating of one's heart; yet this was but a feeble prelude to the horror with which one heard, an instant later, the victim's skull crunch in the

lion's jaws. The agonized trumpeting of the elephant when a tiger's claws were buried in his eyes thrilled every nerve; yet the tiger's death-yell, when hurled against the podium wall, had a more poignant ring.

Sometimes there were sights so horrible that, being unaccustomed to such things, I closed my eyes, lest I should vomit; and this happened often during the tortures of the Christian martyrs. Their calm demeanour and astounding courage sometimes suggested the impious thought that a real and powerful god supported them. Unflinchingly they met their doom, and showing no fear, welcomed death with a joyous smile, always affirming, with the last breath, confidence in their Christ.

But there were many gayer episodes, during which the great audience rocked with mirth and laughter. There were buffoons who, disguising themselves as animals by wearing their skins, engaged in combat with mock gladiators, the latter affecting terror and cowardice in the presence of these harmless clowns. Such diversions served to cool the blood, which, during life and death struggles, courses through the veins like fire.

Each evening the meat from the slaughtered animals was distributed to the poor, and this, though a kind charity, led to much fighting. At the end of the performance on the third and last day, sweets

and cakes, with trinkets and small silver coins specially struck as a souvenir of the occasion, were showered among the people.

I was glad to have these trifles, that I might take them home to my sisters and brothers; but, for myself, I need no such remembrance. The splendour and the beauty, the horror and the pathos, of the sights I witnessed, will never fade from my memory till I die. The gods be praised!

I waked from my dream, but some minutes elapsed before I could collect my senses and realize my actual surroundings. The bareness of my tiny whitewashed bedroom, the heavily-barred window so strongly shadowed on the opposite wall, the roaring of camels, with the chatter of children and beggars in an unfamiliar tongue, combined to create a hazy impression that I was confined in a Roman cell, though whether as a pagan criminal or a Christian martyr I was not sure. Doubts as to my personality and surroundings, however, were soon set at rest by three bronze-skinned urchins, who, pulling themselves up to the window-sill by the iron bars, called out in chorus: "Je vous vois! Donnez moi un sou."

A KAIROUAN WELL

CHAPTER XI

St. Augustine and the Amphitheatre. The Backsliding of Alypius

Apart from their association with Christian martyrdoms, the exciting pleasures of the amphitheatre were wholly abhorrent to the ascetic spirit of the early Fathers. The laudation of physical power —the very marrow of the arena and the essence of gladiatorial combats—was hateful to the Christian, who regarded the body as an unworthy husk which trammelled the freedom of the soul; a natural enemy, to be scourged, ill-treated, mortified, and insulted.

The circus was the first of worldly pleasures which the convert was expected to give up, and that this renunciation was no easy one is shown by St. Augustine's story of his friend Alypius, from which I give the following extract:

"Alypius was a native of the same town as myself; his parents were burgesses of the best condition, but he was younger than I. For he

had been one of my pupils when I first began to lecture in our town, and afterwards at Carthage, and he was warmly attached to me through his opinion of my character and learning ; so also was I to him, because of the virtuous excellence which was conspicuous in one so young.

" But at Carthage the foolish passion for public shows is like a boiling whirlpool ; he too had been sucked in by the madness of the circus. While he was tossing miserably in this gulf, I had already become professor of rhetoric there, and kept a school ; but he did not as yet attach himself to my class, in consequence of a difference which had arisen between his father and myself.

" I had discovered that he was ruinously addicted to the circus, and it was a deep grief to me, because I thought he was likely to ruin, if he had not already ruined, such fair hopes. But I could find no opportunity of admonishing or putting any pressure upon him, because I had neither the confidence of friendship nor the authority of a master.

" One day, when I was sitting in my accustomed place with all my pupils around me, he came, saluted me, took his seat, and applied his mind to the subject in hand. It so happened that I was busy with the exposition of a passage which suggested the use of the Circensian games as an illustra-

tion, enabling me to convey my meaning in a clearer and more attractive way, with a touch of sarcasm upon the victims of that mad folly.

"Thou knowest, O my God, that I was not thinking of curing Alypius of that plague. But he took my words home to himself, and thought that I had so spoken only on his account. Moved by my words, Alypius leaped out of that deep pit into which he had wilfully plunged, and wherein he was blinded by a wretched passion; he shook his mind with a strong self-control, till all the mud of the circus flew out of it."

So long as he remained in Carthage, where he was under the personal influence of St. Augustine, Alypius appears to have abjured the amphitheatre, but some months later business affairs took him to Rome, and there he relapsed into his old habits. St. Augustine continues:

"There he was again seized—is it not amazing? —with an incredible passion for gladiatorial shows. He had hated and abominated them, but a knot of friends and fellow-students, happening to meet him in the street as they were returning from breakfast, dragged him with playful violence into the amphitheatre, in spite of his refusal and resistance, while these cruel and bloody games were going on. 'If,' cried he, 'you drag my body thither, and put me there, can you force me to give my mind or

eyes to such a show? I shall be absent in spirit, though present in body, and thus I shall overcome both you and it.' Nevertheless they forced him to go along with them, being curious, perhaps, to know whether he could do what he said. They arrived, and took their seats in the best places they could find, at a moment when the whole theatre was raging with hideous excitement.

"He shut his eyes tight, and forbade his thoughts to dally with such crimes. Would that he could have sealed his ears also! For, at some time of the fight, the whole people broke into a roar of shouting, and overcome by curiosity, confident that whatever happened he could despise and forget, even though he saw, he opened his eyes.

"Then was he struck with a deadlier wound in his soul than the gladiator whom he lusted to behold received in the flesh, and he fell more miserably than the poor wretch over whose fall arose that bellow, which pierced his ears, unlocked his eyes, and laid open his soul to the fatal thrust.

"At the sight of blood he drank of it ruthlessly. No longer did he turn away, but fixed his gaze and drained the cup of fury. He was fascinated by the sin of battle, and drunk with murderous joy. He was no longer the Alypius who had come, but one of the crowd which he had joined, and the hardened accomplice of those who had brought him. What

should I say more? He gazed, he shouted, he raved, and he carried home with him a frenzy which goaded him to return, not only with those who had dragged him thither, but also without them, luring others thither in his turn."

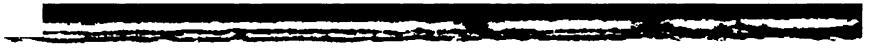
CHAPTER XII

KAIROUAN

KAIROUAN, unlike nearly all the other cities of Tunisia, has no classical associations. In this wonderful country, where things fashioned from 2,000 to 3,000 years ago are constantly before one's eyes, the standard of antiquity becomes so high that A.D. 800 seems a comparatively modern date; yet at home we regard with considerable veneration buildings erected 1,100 years ago. In itself, apart from its history, Kairouan is undoubtedly the most interesting city in Tunisia; glowing with colour, scintillating with light, and teeming with Oriental life, it seems to realize all one's dreams of an Eastern town.

The first glimpse of Kairouan is obtained from El Ham, the last station on the railway before arriving. From this distance the tower of the Grand Mosque stands out from the flat landscape, a conspicuous and almost isolated object, reminding one of the dome of St. Peter's at Rome seen from

MOSQUE OF SIDI-EL-ALLENI, KAIROUAN



across the Campagna. As one gets nearer, the domes and minarets of smaller mosques become visible, and the dominant importance of the great tower diminishes. From the train one can also see in the distance the lake of El Ham, where the flamingos, which we had hoped to see shooting like red flames above the ruins of Carthage, take up their abode during the cooler months of the year. At the station there is the usual amusing though alarming spectacle of fifty tattered Arabs fighting and wrestling, with many ejaculations and imprecations, for the honour and profit of carrying your hand luggage.

There are two hotels in Kairouan—the Grand Hotel Splendid and the Grand Hotel Victoria. There is absolutely nothing grand or splendid about either of them except their names, and, but for their names, they might both be suitably described, in the diction of Baedeker, as "quite unpretending." They are situated in good open positions, and look on to a small public garden outside the Arab town, but within three or four minutes' walk of it.

If Tunis has been for many centuries the capital of the country to which it has given its name, if for long it has been the seat of government and the centre of commerce, it is none the less true that Kairouan always remained the religious capital in

the estimation of the people. Founded by the conqueror Sidi Okbah at the time of the Arab invasion of North-West Africa, she retained in the eyes of all faithful Mussulmen a distinction second only to that of Mecca. She was a city in which since her creation the Crescent had reigned without dispute. For more than 1,200 years the Iman had expounded the meaning of the Koran to the faithful, without fear that his words would meet the ear of infidel or Christian; and when from the heights of the minaret the mueddin called to prayer the true believer, no sanctuary or emblem of a rival faith had come within his vision.

The incontestable prestige of Kairouan became, alas! her weakness, and brought about her doom; for such was her importance as the acknowledged stronghold of Moslem fanaticism that the French believed, perhaps rightly, that the only way in which they could hope to secure the permanent peace of the country was by striking a blow at the very heart of a religious system which preaches prejudice, intolerance, and exclusiveness. They therefore prepared to attack the city, which, to their great surprise, offered practically no resistance, and surrendered unconditionally. The mosques were immediately entered by the French soldiers, and it was announced that, in future, Christians were to be admitted at all times, except during the hours of Moslem prayer.

The result of this policy seems from the French point of view to have been entirely successful. The city has lost Moslem prestige. Her vanity, her pride, her self-esteem were humbled in the dust; the lordly airs of arrogance so proudly worn for many hundred years, where were they now? The blow was completely and terribly effective: no recovery was possible from this violation of her virgin purity; her spirit was broken, and there was no longer any strength left in her.

Kismet! The Arab accepts the inevitable, and so far as one can judge from external demeanour, he now bears no feeling of resentment towards the multitude of tourists who daily intrude themselves into the privacy of his sanctuary, even during his hours of prayer. It is interesting to compare in this connection the status of the foreigner in Kairouan to-day with that given by Monsieur Guérin, who visited the then sacred city in 1862, only nineteen years before the French occupation. He encamped at a discreet distance from the town while waiting for the return of his messenger.

"I despatched Muhammad to the Khalife of Kairouan with the passport from the Bey, and we waited for his return. The passport of His Highness, which for all other places is an absolute order, sufficient to open to the Christian who carries it the doors of every town in Tunisia, is for this

city a polite request, a mere letter of recommendation. The authorities of Kairouan have the right to refuse to admit within their walls the Christian who presents this mandate, without the Bey having any formal right to punish them. At five o'clock Muhammad returned, accompanied by three sheikhs and three soldiers, and, surrounded by this escort, at ten minutes past five I entered the town. The sides of the gateway by which we entered were encumbered by a compact mass of the curious, more or less well-intentioned. The arrival of a Christian is always an event to the inhabitants of Kairouan, and at the particular moment when I visited the town the news of the massacres in Syria had greatly agitated them. My arrival under these dubious circumstances had excited their lively curiosity, and many believed that, under the pretext of searching for inscriptions, I sought to pry into their affairs. A quarter of an hour later I was installed at the Dar-el-Bey, where the Khalife offered me a generous hospitality; but at the same time he recommended me, with much emphasis, never to go out alone. During the three days I passed in the town he insisted, in spite of his great age, in accompanying me everywhere with several sheikhs. 'Who knows,' he said, 'what might happen?' As a matter of fact, even the presence of the Governor did not entirely protect me from insult, and in one case,

EXTERIOR OF THE CORN MARKET, KAIROUAN

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where a lewd soldier outraged both me and my title of Christian, I was obliged to make energetic protests, in order to obtain the apology which was my due."

The following quaint account of the foundation of Kairouan is given by the Arab historian Novairi. I have translated it from the French of Monsieur Noel des Vergers. "Okbah-ben-Nafi, having resolved to found the city of Kairouan, conducted his soldiers to the site he had chosen, which was a thick forest, without the slightest trace of a path; but when his followers were told to begin the work they protested, saying: 'What! do you wish us to construct a town in the midst of an impenetrable forest? How can we doubt that savage beasts and all manner of deadly serpents will attack us?' Okbah, whose power of intercession with the Divinity was omnipotent, prayed to God in a loud voice, while his warriors responded 'Amen!' to his invocations. Then he spoke thus: 'O ye serpents and savage beasts, know that we are the companions of the Prophet of Allah! Retire from this district in which we have chosen to establish ourselves! Those of you whom we encounter later will be put to death.' When he had uttered these words the Mussulmen saw with astonishment, during the whole day, venomous beasts and ferocious animals retiring afar off, and carrying their young with

them—a miracle which converted a large number of Berbers to Islamism."

Leaving history, let me try to describe Kairouan as she is to-day. A five-minute stroll from the hotel brings one to the great crenellated walls of the city and the fine old gateway now known as the Porte de France. A few yards along the street is the Kaid's house, which the owner, with extreme good-nature, is always willing to show to visitors; but it is hardly worth while to avail oneself of his kindness, as, though Arab in plan, it has been redecorated in the worst type of French taste. On either side of the big domed hall there are recesses with beds—not divans, but unblushing beds, with white pillows and crude blue silk counterpanes—the sort of bed on which one expects to be told that Napoleon passed the night before some famous battle. Escaping from these and other European horrors, and passing under a short avenue of graceful pepper-trees, one arrives at the entrance to the souks, the centre of the principal street and the heart of the city.

The street takes a bend, and whitewashed domes and minarets tell out in startling brilliancy against the deep blue sky. To the right, at a corner, there is a particularly nice arcaded café, formerly the corn-market. Its arches are decorated with broad black painted lines, in imitation of black and

THE OLD CORN MARKET, KAIROUAN

white marble construction, a form of decoration abhorrent to the architectural purist, but quite sympathetic to the mere painter. I spent a wet afternoon in making a sketch here—the only wet day we had during our sojourn of five weeks. I was well sheltered from the rain, but the awnings which were lowered to keep it out also excluded the fresh air, and the atmosphere was of a density defying description. It was rendered considerably worse by the close proximity of a holy man, a sort of marabout. He was a fat and very merry gentleman, and wore no fez or turban, but his long thick hair was plaited into a countless number of tails and heavily greased. He said something to me with an expressive action of the first finger and thumb, and, supposing that he wanted money, I handed a few sous. Had he not been already seated on the ground, he would certainly have fallen to it in the access of mirth which my offer provoked.

He could speak no French, but a neighbouring Arab explained to me that a marabout never demands or accepts money, but receives presents of food, clothing, etc., and lives from hand to mouth in this way. He had asked me for a cigarette, and not until he had received it did he stop laughing, or recover the decorous gravity of demeanour which we are accustomed to associate with holy men.

Not that he ever assumed conventional airs of

piety; rollicking good-humour was portrayed in every line of his face and curve of his figure, and in searching for his European counterpart one could only think of the jolly fat friar of fiction. His contented condition seemed a testimony to the charity of the Arabs, but one wondered if he had any more effective claims to holiness than plaited hair and a waggish tongue.

Judging from the number of marabout tombs, holy men are nearly as common in Tunisia as blackberries in England. It is in the main an hereditary distinction—even reverting in some cases to a daughter. They have great prestige in the eyes of common people, and are generally very well to do. I do not believe that our friend of the café was a genuine marabout. He was probably holy only in the Arab sense of being slightly daft. It is terribly difficult to extract precise information on any subject from the Arab guide, who, as a rule, seems to know very little about his own traditions, and gives random and very bewildering replies to one's questions. In Tangier I had a guide, Muhammad Shieb by name, an excellent fellow, whom I can strongly recommend to any of my readers who visit that exciting and restless city, where a reliable guide is a special boon. Shieb spoke French, German, Spanish, and English, and the latter language so perfectly that, as he had told me he had never been out of Morocco, I

asked him how he had acquired his knowledge. He replied that as a youth he had been ambitious of becoming a holy man, for which distinction it was incumbent that he should be able to repeat the whole of the Koran by heart. After studying hard for seven years, he could repeat the half of it. At that point he lost either faith or perseverance, and renounced his ambition; but he assured me that, by comparison with the mental effort of learning half the Koran, the mastery of modern languages was mere child's play. Extremes meet, and it would seem that to graduate as a holy man it is needful to possess either more or less than the average amount of brains. I remember that in Tangier also there was a specimen of the unintellectual, not to say imbecile, type of holy man. His form of penance consisted in wearing all the filthy rags he could lay hands on. He was always on the lookout for additional rags, and, as the streets of Tangier are for the most part dustbins, there was no difficulty in finding what he wanted. Fresh treasures acquired, he proceeded to cut them into small pieces and tie them on to a piece of string, so that they formed something which looked like the tail of a kite, and this tail was at once wound round his limbs or body. As no rags were ever removed, and as adding rags to his person had been his sole occupation for several years, his condition can more easily be

imagined than described. The layers of rags round his legs had become so thick that he could only walk with his feet wide apart, and then with difficulty, and his odour polluted the air for fifty yards round. When one remembers that the Koran strongly enjoins cleanliness, and that the good Moslem always washes before entering the mosque, often three or four times a day, it seems a strange parodox that this poor filthy idiot should have been regarded as holy.

I have somehow wandered far away from the Grand Rue of Kairouan and the native café where I met the fat little saint with plaited hair. I remember witnessing there, on another occasion, an incident which interested me. An Arab was being cupped. For how long the operation had been going on before I arrived on the scene I do not know, but the patient was propped up against a pillar, looking very pale and wan. The cups were still attached to his neck, and every now and then the doctor, if such one can call him, came to empty away the blood which had been drawn off. Presently the sun reached the unfortunate man, and evidently rendered him uncomfortable. He tried to move, but was quite unable to do so, and was lifted, a helpless invalid, into a shady corner. I had often seen natives being cupped before, but in the other cases the

ENTRANCE TO THE SOUKS, KAIROUAN

Graham Petrie

patient had always been a full-blooded, strong-looking chap, to whom the loss of a little blood was not very serious, and might conceivably be an advantage; but in this case the poor victim looked so wretchedly weak and unable to withstand the treatment, that he recalled the scathing satire of Le Sage on the ignorance of the doctors of his time and their habit of bleeding patients for every ailment under the sun.

In a climate like that of Kairouan, with its light, dry crisp air and its perpetual sunshine, Nature has more than her usual chance of proving victorious in her fight with the doctors; so perhaps we need not feel depressed about the future of this hapless-looking Arab.

Just round the corner from this café, and, indeed, adjoining it, there is an external kitchen, which in appearance is something like a big German tiled stove, and perched aloft on it, shaded by an awning, sits an Arab, busily cooking and serving fritters. They smelt so good that I longed to taste one, yet lacked courage; but he did not lack numerous and appreciative customers. There are many such outdoor fritter shops in Kairouan, and they are always a point of interest. Opposite this kitchen there are usually a number of boys with donkeys for hire. The packs which take the place of saddles are very primitive, but in spite of that the donkey saves the fatigue of a long walk,

through roughly cobbled streets, to the Grand Mosque, or of the longer and sometimes very hot and dusty pilgrimage to the Mosque du Barbier.

A few yards farther on, opposite to the main entrance to the souks, there is another café, a very humble one without architectural features sham or genuine; but it has a big shady awning, and its position is so attractive that it is worth while to sit down, and, ordering a cup of coffee, watch the stream of Oriental life which passes to and fro. Facing us is the big archway of the souks, the recess of which looks dark as night by contrast to the blaze of light on the intervening street and the white burnouses of the busy crowd. The archway is flanked on either side by bread-stalls, and the vendors are busily occupied, not so much in selling bread, as in whisking away the millions of flies which collect on everything edible. Is there anything, I wonder, which is unpalatable to the catholic taste of a fly? I speak feelingly, for at the present moment they are taking an unfair advantage of the fact that my hands are occupied, and are exploiting, with exasperating deliberation, the furrows of my brow and the phrenology of my freshly-mown cranium. But though they do not despise the leathery bread of the Kairouan baker, or the honest sweat of the hapless artist's brow, their favourite fare is undoubtedly the sweet and sticky

date. So attractive do they find this succulent and nutritious fruit that one hardly sees the dates, so thick is the coverlid of flies. The date-sellers give up the contest as hopeless, and their whisks lie idle by their sides; but when you see a basket of flies, you may take for granted that somewhere in its depths there are dates. Turning our eyes from the fly-pestered bread-vendors to our coffee-cups, blowing away the dozen flies collected on the rims, and extracting with the finger (spoons are never served) half a dozen valiant swimmers, let us note some other details in this strange medley, this bewildering hotchpotch, of men and beasts and things.

To the right there is a vegetable-stall, and the owner is seated on a sort of high dais or table. He is wearing a blue shirt, purple pantaloons, a yellow embroidered waistcoat, and a pink turban. His face and limbs are walnut brown, and his beard is silver grey. He is seated cross-legged on his white burnous, and in the stillness of his pose and impassive expression might be a statue of Buddha. At his side are some large scales, which give another hint of symbolism, and his dark eyes have that fixed look of philosophic contemplation so deceptive in the ruminating cow, and perhaps equally so in the case of Kairouan Arabs. His vegetables lie in heaps on the ground in front of him—potatoes, carrots, broad-beans, and leeks, and the pungent

smell from the latter is not unpleasant by contrast to others less hygienic. It is for the customer to put the vegetables on to the scale, our philosopher contenting himself with arranging the weights and pocketing the money.

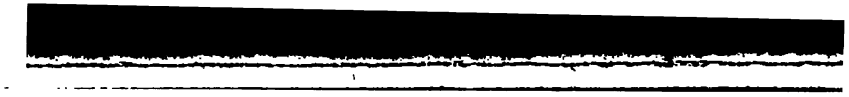
Camels and donkeys pass by in a continuous stream, and the noise of the animals, with the cries of the crowd, combine in making a Babel of sound. Suddenly a clear, high, musical note arrests attention. It is the familiar chant of the mueddin, wafted across the city from the tower of the Great Mosque. "Arise! arise! It is better to pray than to rest! God is great! Praise be to God, the Lord of all creatures! Him do we worship, and from Him we must beg for help! Arise! arise! arise! It is better to pray than to rest!"

There is a stir among the faithful in the café, but we will not follow them to the mosque, for it is hardly fair to intrude on their devotions from motives of idle curiosity. Let us pay for our coffee —the price is one sou—and visit a famous holy well which is within a stone's-throw of us.

The Baruti Well is worked by an unhappy camel, who spends his life in walking round and round a small circular track. His eyes are blindfolded, and perhaps, poor creature, he thinks that if he keeps his heart up and his legs going, he will some day reach his beloved desert.

THE VEGETABLE MARKET, KAIROUAN

Graham Petrie



The well is said to be as old as Kairouan itself, and the story runs that when Sidi Okbah and his followers were laying out the plans of the city, they were consumed with thirst, but could find no water. Suddenly a greyhound appeared, covered with wet mud. In canine fashion he beckoned them to follow him, and, doing so, they arrived at this well, which was named Baruti in memory of the dog.

All the good Moslems of Kairouan, moreover, cherish the belief that this well is directly connected with the holy well of Zemzen at Mecca, in proof of which they relate the following incident: Many centuries ago a good pilgrim from Kairouan accidentally dropped his satchel into the holy well of Zemzen. At first he was greatly distressed at his loss, but philosophy came to his aid, and, being a good and faithful Moslem, he said: "So it is written, Allah be praised!" Resigned to his loss, he straightway returned to his native city, and, fetching water from the Baruti Well, he found his lost satchel in the first bucketful, thus proving that the water of the Baruti Well comes straight from the holy well of Mecca.

The Grand Rue of Kairouan is from one end to the other a realm of delight to the artist; but, alas! there is never a rose without a thorn, and here the painter's cross is undoubtedly the butcher's stall.

The butcher of Kairouan has no fixed site for his business, but chooses it with reference to the shade, more or less incomplete, which it provides at the moment. In the hot summer afternoons the artist also seeks shade for his work; and, by a perversity of Fate, the butchers invariably choose just those corners which are quite irresistible to the enthusiastic artist, who is obliged to work in close proximity to sights and smells of which I will spare the reader a description, lest he should for ever lose his appetite for flesh-pots. As the hour gets later prices are reduced, odours become stronger, flies multiply, and customers are more numerous. The Bedouins and the Arabs of the poorest class buy their meat at a very late hour, and, with their horrid purchases dangling from their fingers, they bend over the artist to see what he is doing.

The gate at the farther end of the Grand Rue is now called the Porte de Tunis. This old entrance on the inside is a beautiful piece of architecture, consisting of two horseshoe arches one above the other. Passing under it through a vaulted arcade, one turns some fifty yards to the right, between two walls, before reaching the outer gate, an interesting arrangement for doubling the security of defence at this point. The passage between the inner and outer walls is now used by saddle-stuffers, and is a very picturesque corner. But though the double

gate was a clever precaution for safety, it necessitated a very devious course for the continuous stream of life, human and animal, passing to and fro, and there is now a modern gate to the left of the old one. Moving with the crowd under the new gate, one finds oneself in a huge "sok," or square, with booths and tents in all directions, and crowds of Arabs clustered round various centres of attraction, which, strange to say, recalled to my eye Hyde Park on Sunday afternoons, where the crowds of rival preachers and demagogues present such a different aspect.

One circle will perhaps be watching the serpent-charmer; another listening to the professional story-teller, as he relates the successes of the brave and the defeats of the weak in love and war. The Arab has little sympathy for the weak, be the weakness physical or mental, unless, indeed, the mental weakness amounts to madness, in which case he regards it as something holy, and treats it with awe and reverence. Another group is perhaps watching the self-inflicted tortures of a demoralized religious fanatic, who, having learnt these tricks under the influence of genuine emotion, now uses them as an easy method of gaining a living. The tents are occupied by vendors of all kinds of useless-looking things—things one cannot imagine that anyone would want to buy, such as a little heap of

rusty nails, a padlock and key, a damaged mirror, a string of coral beads, or some sticky sweetmeats, all arranged in neat little piles. The owners of these tents have to pay a rent of twopence a day to the French Control, and one wonders how there can be any margin of profit on the sales. On the right there is a row of little shops, where men are busy making mats, baskets, camel nosebags, and all sorts of similar things, with a coarse grass rush, which has much of the suppleness and durability of Panama straw.

A little farther on there is a huge walled courtyard or "fondak," where in the morning and evening one may see hundreds of camels being loaded and unloaded by picturesque and excited Orientals—a fascinating spot for taking snapshots, yet rarely visited by the tourist.

CHAPTER XIII

The Mosques of Kairouan

The great pride and glory of Kairouan is its Grand Mosque, which, as it now stands, dates from A.D. 821. It is built on the site of the original mosque, erected at the foundation of the city by the great Sidi Okbah in A.D. 670. No doubt the materials used are those of the first edifice, though the hundreds of marble columns, the carved capitals, and sculptured cornices are of Roman workmanship, and, it is believed, were brought from Carthage.

Annually for many centuries pilgrims in their thousands have come from afar to visit this great mosque. Certain books assert that the founder is buried here, and also the Kings of Tunisia. Both statements are wholly incorrect. The mosque proper is rarely, if ever, used as a place of interment, and the bones of Sidi Okbah lie in the primitive village which bears his name, fifteen miles south of Biskra, in Algeria, while the Beys are buried under a dome of bright green tiles in Tunis.

Mausoleums erected to the memory and honour of Arab saints are loosely spoken of by Europeans as mosques, but the natives always speak of them as marabouts. A mosque is primarily a place for prayer, and prayers are never said in a marabout's tomb. The Koran is read in them, and a sort of religious college or school is often attached to them; but there is no "mihrab" to mark the direction of Mecca, and though there is sometimes a small tower, it is only an architectural feature, and never from its gallery does the mueddin call the faithful to prayer. The so-called Mosque du Barbier and the Mosque des Sabres are really marabout tombs of unusual importance and magnificence.

Besides the distinction given by age and history, the Grand Mosque has the impressiveness of immensity. Its minaret towers up against the sky from a distance at which the city and the smaller minarets are quite invisible; its courtyard reminds one, merely by reason of its scale, of the piazza of St. Mark at Venice, while its interior is a bewildering forest of massive aisles and columns. In its plan it strongly resembles the cathedral of Cordova; but though at Cordova one keenly resents the intrusion of the Gothic cathedral which usurps the centre of the Moorish building, yet this incongruous impertinence introduces a certain mystery which is noticeably lacking in its prototype. The walls of the

ENTRANCE TO THE MOSQUE DU BARBIER, KAIROUAN

Cordova mosque, moreover, are richly decorated, so that when the eye has travelled through a long avenue of marble columns, it finds its reward in a harmony of mosaics or tiles; but at Kairouan the seventeen whitewashed aisles of eight arches each lead to nothing but a bare whitewashed wall, except in the case of the central aisle, at the end of which is the "mihrab." The extreme monotony of the effect is often increased by the lighting, which comes mainly, if not entirely, from the seventeen huge open doors facing the courtyard. This universal lighting is very ineffective, and I wish that I could have seen the mosque at sundown, with all the little oil-lamps alight, or, still better, on the occasion of some special feast, when the great hanging lustres are used. The enormous doors are elaborately panelled and carved in geometrical patterns of astonishing variety, each door being quite different to the others in detail, yet similar in the scale of its divisions and subdivisions and in general effect. The antique marble columns are of different kinds of marble, and often of different diameter, though supporting the same weight. The carved capitals which they support are of all styles, and frequently seem too large or too small. Another detail which detracts from the effect is the way in which the straw mats which cover the floor are taken round the bases of the columns to the height of about a

yard—an arrangement which may add to the comfort of the Arabs who lean against them, but which is far from enhancing the architectural dignity of the building.

The court seems very bald, and the glare from its white flagstones is blinding. The courtyard of the mosque at Cordova is said to have been planted with groves of orange-trees, which continued the lines of the interior aisles; and perhaps something of the same kind existed at Kairouan in the zenith of its prosperity, when the great cisterns now in ruins outside the Porte de Tunis provided abundant supply of water, and Christian slaves rendered labour cheap; but there is no hint of anything so restful to the eye to-day, nor have I heard or read of such a thing in the past.

The immense square tower looks squat and stunted from close quarters, and it is not until the weary visitor climbs its endless stairs that he realizes its great height. Perseverance in this prolonged treadmill exercise is happily rewarded when at last the summit is reached, for the view across the flat, barren plain is very extensive. From one side the sea is visible; from another the beautiful mountains of Zaguoan and Bou Cornein display their graceful outlines against the sky; while from a third point a gleam of silver denotes the shallow lakes, haunted by those graceful coral-coloured flamingos

who sometimes migrate to the Lake of Tunis, but never, alas! when I am there to welcome them. Inside the mosque there is a cluster of columns, between which, it is said by the guides, only those who are free from sin can pass. None of our party were able to accomplish the feat, but our guide slipped easily through, thereby proving that a saint may look like a thorough-paced rogue ; but though we complimented him on this irrefutable evidence of his holiness, we preferred to think that our own failure was due rather to superior depth of chest than to an inferior standard of morals.

I have recorded my own impressions of the mosque, which were disappointing; but the friend with whom I had the privilege of visiting it, an English professor and a man of deep culture and wide travel, was deeply affected by what he considered to be a perfect architectural expression of the spirit of monotheistic worship.

THE MOSQUE DU BARBIER

The Mosque du Barbier lies to the west of the town, about half a mile beyond the Porte de Tunis. To make the pilgrimage on foot means a hot, shadeless, and often very dusty, walk, but one not devoid of interest or beauty.

Leaving the " Kasbah " on the right, one looks

from a slightly elevated plateau across an immense tract of barren, treeless country. On the sandy foreground, destitute of a single blade of grass, a few camels may generally be seen resting in company with their white-robed owners, while on the lower level flows a continuous stream of Arabs, Bedouins, camels, donkeys, oxen, sheep, and goats. Just at this corner I noticed a kneeling camel, with a strange-looking burden, and I asked my guide what it was. He spoke to one of the two Arabs seated beside it, who replied that it was the body of his wife, and that he had travelled for a day and a night to bring her to Kairouan, that she might be buried in the cemetery of the Mosque du Barbier. They were waiting in the shade for the evening hour of prayer, which is also the hour of interment. One hears so much about the Arab's treatment of his wife being brutal, yet this poor man had journeyed on foot, through shadeless country, in exceptionally hot weather, for his wife's honour or future happiness—I know not which.

Less than half-way to the mosque one passes an enormous ruined reservoir, open to the sky. The rest of the walk is between large plantations of cactus, of the prickly variety which specially appeals to the camel as a succulent diet. Outside the mosque there is often a small encampment of Bedouins, always so picturesque, and during the whole walk

A COURTYARD OF THE MOSQUE DU BARBIER, KAIROUAN

one has been able to enjoy the pale blue distant mountains, which form a delightful background to the dazzling white building.

In the large outer courtyard of the mosque there are two beautiful marble doorways, inlaid with tiles. It is usual to enter by the one to the left, and so reach an inner court, which is altogether delightful. It is arcaded all round with stilted horseshoe arches, supported by marble columns with carved capitals which appear to be of Byzantine workmanship. On three sides of the court there are a number of cells, with massive oak doors, in which live the professional readers of the Koran. According to my guide, these men are paid by the Bey of Tunis to read the Koran for so many hours a day to the honour of Allah, Muhammad his Prophet, Muhammad's barber, and the whole Moslem world. Many of these men, who seemed to be the counterparts of our medieval monks, were sitting in their cells intoning the Koran in a monotonous, droning voice, counting their beads in orthodox Catholic fashion. My guide, who, though he spoke both French and Italian with considerable fluency, could neither read nor write in any language, told me that he bitterly regretted his lack of qualification for a life which above all others he would have liked to lead. In a corner of the court several boys were being taught to write. They sat cross-legged, with their copy-

books on their knees, and used as a pen a short pointed stick, held quite vertically.

A small door to the right opens on a staircase, by which one ascends to another courtyard, also arcaded and showing some fairly good tiles and carved stucco, the latter being much restored. The doorway leading to the mausoleum, where the Barber lies, is elaborately carved in the style of the First Empire. The interior is quite uninteresting, being decorated with a bastard mixture of modern French and Arab taste.

THE MOSQUE DES SABRES

Of the numerous mosques which support the prestige and distinction of Kairouan as a holy city, the most beautiful externally is the Mosque des Sabres, as it is commonly called—the tomb of a latter-day saint, one Emir-Ben-Said-Bou-Muphteh, also called Emir Abada. This eccentric marabout lived but fifty years ago, and seems to owe his prestige to his questionable sanity and the generous patronage of the then reigning Bey, who promised to build him a tomb with seven domes, but who died before the seventh was completed.

Much of Abada's time seems to have been spent in making gargantuan swords, far too large to be wielded, the blades being covered with inscriptions from the Koran, and their edges left quite blunt. He also

MOSQUE DES SABRES, KAIROUAN

brought to Kairouan four enormous anchors, supposed to be those which held Noah's ark to Mount Ararat. The swords are hung inside the mosque, and the anchors are in the courtyard of a house close by, where His Holiness Emir Abada lived. As to how the anchors were brought there, divergent stories are told. One version relates that they were brought from Tunis by the united energies of 500 men during five months; another that they miraculously hopped after the marabout as he led the way on a swift horse. It seems strange that there should be any doubt on a matter of such recent history. Certain it is that at Kairouan the anchors now lie. They are of gigantic size, and why anyone should have desired to bring them to a city forty miles from the sea passeth all understanding.

Mr. Broadly, in his "Tunis Past and Present," tells us that: "During the siege of Sebastopol, Emir Abada constructed two cannon with his own hands. He wrote to the Bey that the Prophet had appeared to him, and announced that on their arrival before the beleaguered town the latter would at once surrender. They were expeditiously forwarded to Tunis, and at the Bey's pressing request the Sultan sent a ship to convey them to Constantinople, and thence to the Turkish camp before Sebastopol. By an extraordinary coincidence, within a few hours of their being landed the town capitulated."

In spite of his fine-sounding name, it is difficult to credit Emir-Ben-Said-Bou-Muphteh-Abada with exceptional intelligence, and it was probably by a mere accident that he employed an architect of great talent to design his tomb. The interior is very bare and has never been completed, but the exterior is magnificent in its carefully considered proportions and bold simplicity.

From outside the city in the late evening it gives an impression of enormous size, and seems more like an enchanted city of domes than a single mosque of moderate size.

Seeing it for the first time under an exceptionally beautiful effect, it made a deeper impression on me than any other building in Kairouan, not excluding the Grand Mosque, and it was something of a shock to learn, later, that in this medieval city it is the one edifice which lacks the halo of antiquity.

To the Zaouia of the Aissaouia I have devoted a special chapter, but of the remaining twenty mosques and ninety "zaouias" it is hardly necessary to speak individually, though their domes and minarets confer on the sacred city an air of distinction which is one of her notable charms.

CHAPTER XIV

Zaouia of the Aissaouia, Kairouan

Every Friday afternoon the Aissaouia hold a strange, half-revolting, but very interesting service at the little mosque just outside the city, near the Porte de France. Seen from the street, it is a modest little building with a single dome. Passing from the street under a horseshoe archway, one finds oneself in a pleasant court, on the further side of which are three arched doorways, with a few signs and emblems painted in primitive colours. The doors are open, letting a flood of light into the mosque, which, without payment or any kind of formality, visitors are allowed to enter. It is a square domed building, extended on two sides by arched recesses. The dome is ribbed, and is lightened by a few small windows, fretted in geometrical designs, the piercings in which are filled with coloured glass. From the centre hangs the inevitable cut-glass chandelier, which, though it seems so out of place, is greatly admired by the Arab, and

rarely absent. There are also a few coloured glass balls, the gift, no doubt, of some well-intentioned member of the sect, whose taste has been perverted by a visit to Tunis. Otherwise, everything is in accordance with Arab taste and tradition. From the roof hang ostrich eggs, symbolical of fecundity and the perpetuity of life, and small primitive oil-lamps. The simple whitewashed walls are furnished with antique carpets, framed texts from the Koran, and inconspicuous, but all-important, swords, rapiers, daggers, and skewers, are arranged in groups.

But though the "mise en scène" is never unimportant, its details are soon forgotten in the excitement of the drama which is about to take place. Seated on the floor in an irregular circle under the lofty dome are some fifty adult Arabs, of all ages and of varied type; and, in an outer circle, about as many children. Conspicuous in the group is the marabout, a very sympathetic, dignified, and saintly-looking old man. In the centre of the circle, incense is emitting a strong perfume, while a dozen or more men thrum softly on tambourines and drums.

The proceedings are at a preliminary stage, and though the marabout is grave and thoughtful, everyone else seems quite cheerful and light-hearted. The men and youths are talking and chaffing, the

A MARABOUT'S TOMB, KAIROUAN

children are as elated and excited as if they were about to witness a performance of their beloved serpent-charmer, while the babies, of whom there are several, crow and clap their hands in responsive sympathy with their elders. Presently a score of men, detaching themselves from their fellows, form a line, their backs to the open doorways, their faces towards the music, the incense, and the marabout. They link arms, and begin to sway in rhythm with the drums. The music gets louder, and those who are still seated clap their hands to the beating of the drums. But even now the mental atmosphere is not serious; the children are still laughing and joking. Suddenly, a curious high treble trill comes from behind a wooden grille at the back of one of the side recesses. It comes from the mouths of a score of women. It is a strange, weird noise, and is produced by pitching the voice at a high note, and at the same time moving the tongue with extreme rapidity from side to side.

The effect is vibrant, piercing, exciting ; one instantly feels that another stage has been reached. In addition to the swaying movement, the men now shake their heads backwards and forwards, with a curiously loose action of the neck. Some of them toss away the fez and allow the long tail of hair—left unshaven, it is said, that they may thereby be pulled up to heaven—to swing alternately over

the face and neck. The music gets quicker and louder. Against the brilliant light of the courtyard the long row of thin, emaciated figures presents a strange aspect. Their gaunt limbs are faintly visible through their thin garments, like the shadowy bones of an X-ray photograph.

The drum-beats become louder and louder, the pace more and more terrific, the swaying of the body and the tossing of the head becomes a continuous and circular movement, tongues protrude, eyeballs start out of their sockets, and madness seems written everywhere. The noise of the drums has reached such a breathless pace that no further degree of acceleration is possible ; the intermittent screams have become a continuous yell.

Suddenly the music and clapping stop ; and after a few seconds of intense silence the active performers, those who are linked in a line, cry out together, " Oh ! oh ! oh !" and again more quickly, " Oh ! oh ! oh !" And again and again, always in perfect time and with ever-increasing rapidity, till it sounds as if everyone was gasping for breath and would die for need of it.

The "oh"-ing ceases and the music recommences; a couple of men detach themselves from the line and throw their bodies backwards and forwards from the waist, keeping time with the music, and letting their heads swing loosely, as if they were attached to

their bodies by nothing but an elastic string. Stripping themselves to the waist, they each seize a couple of rapiers, with large globular handles. One thrusts the blades through his shoulders, leaving them there. Not satisfied with this torture, he fastens three steel pegs into his chest, from which hang iron chains and heavy balls. His fellow-sufferer has placed the point of his rapiers against his stomach, and another man drives them into his body with strokes from a wooden mallet. The holes may have been old ones, but I saw them penetrate into his body to the depth of several inches. Holding the rapiers in his hands towards their heads, he struggles the whole way round the mosque before having them extracted by the marabout.

All this time the music and yelling continue, and, one by one, many of those composing the line break away, and inflict on themselves some form of torture. Young boys thrust skewers, to the number of a dozen, through their lips and cheeks, and one who, for some reason, is not allowed to do so weeps bitter tears of chagrin and disappointment. These wounds leave permanent scars, and one constantly notices, in the bazaars, youths whose faces are disfigured in this way. Later, the swords, daggers, and skewers are withdrawn by the marabout, who, pressing the patient's head against his breast, whis-

pers a prayer into his ear, pats him on the shoulder, and sends him away, comforted and soothed. It was wonderful to see how the frail-looking old man was able to calm the shattered nerves of his flock, and exorcise the demon of hysteria which had been so strenuously invoked. Strong men in the prime of their manhood came to him with bleeding wounds, and tortured, twitching nerves, their faces pale, haggard, and worn. Sobbing, they threw themselves into his arms, with the confidence of little children. They appealed to his moral strength and spiritual help, and he did not fail them; they left him calm, confident, self-controlled, and happy; they had been brave, and, conquering fear, had won the fight.

Besides those I have mentioned, many bewildering feats were performed. Living scorpions and broken glass were swallowed, and prickly cactus munched in the mouth. To those who know the cactus, and how sharp as needles are its prickles, the last feat will, I think, seem the most wonderful of all.

The usual explanation of these performances, of this successful defiance of normal restrictions in the treatment of our bodies, is, that in the condition of hysterical frenzy, artificially produced, the nerves become paralyzed and are insensitive to pain. But this theory does not seem to explain why, when

normal conditions have returned, the wounds should not produce agony, serious illness, and even death.

That the performance is quite genuine can hardly be doubted, as nothing could be gained by playing painful tricks for mere amusement, and the tourists who witness it are few in number. Visitors are charged nothing, though the marabout accepts donations offered, which are usually quite small. On the occasion of my first visit I do not think he received more than five francs, and I know that he only had two francs the second time, as I was the only stranger present. At least sixty men took part in the séance, which lasted for more than two hours. I mention this because there are people who are fond of asserting that these things are a fraud, and only done for money. In accepting alms for the poor, when offered to him, the marabout behaves as every priest in every religion does, and only differs from them in not asking for it. The fact that I constantly saw him in the bazaar, working as an embroiderer in a humble little tailor's shop, demonstrates that he has not been concerned in feathering his own nest.

I have often been obliged to listen to the railings of Europeans against the character of the Arab, his lack of moral stamina, and the uselessness and danger of trusting him to do anything which is not to his obvious, and immediate, material advantage. French-

men who have lived with him for years, who speak his language and who ought to know him well, have assured me that he is incapable of understanding the meaning of honour, honesty, gratitude, or moral obligation, and they would probably point to the rites of the Aissaouia as an instance of imbecile fanaticism. Yet it seems to me that men who can voluntarily go through these ordeals must possess grit and moral fibre; they must have faith and implicit trust in their religion; but it is hardly to be expected that they should regard with trustful affection those who have robbed them of all but nominal independence, who have invaded the mosques of their sacred city, and who are exploiting their country for the glory of France.

The sect of the Aissaouia was originated in Algeria some centuries ago. It is related that their founder was walking on the seashore with a number of his followers, who complained that they were hungry and had no food, whereupon their master told them to eat the pebbles on the beach. They obeyed his command, and found the stones delicious and digestible.

LIFE IN LA GRANDE RUE, KAIROUAN

Graham

CHAPTER XV

Kairouan Ceremonies

An Arab wedding would take place that evening at eight o'clock—so Larby, our guide, informed us; and he imparted this information with an amusing assumption of excitement, as if an Arab wedding were a thing of extreme rarity, which only occurred once in a century. All tourists liked to see weddings, he explained. It was an occasion, an opportunity, which should on no account be missed; it was, indeed, absolutely necessary that we should see this most characteristic function; and moreover, he, Larby, would personally conduct us, so that we should be certain to see everything, and all would be clearly explained, which would not be the case should we be so foolish as to employ an ignorant rival guide. The Arab guide is not always too dignified to blow his own trumpet! Having hurried through our dinner—a difficult and painful feat in Kairouan, where the meat is usually as tough as shoe-leather—we followed our leader to the Arab

town, racing along the Grand Rue, for the clock had already struck eight, and we were fearful lest we should miss the opening proceedings. The street looked gay and attractive, with crowds of Arabs squatting outside the lantern-lit cafés. In one of them an elderly negro was dancing a grotesque "danse-du-ventre," while from another there was wafted a soft, melancholy chant, in a minor key, and Larby explained to us that an Arab musician was singing the story of the conquest of Spain—a very favourite subject with our poets, he complacently added. But we dared not linger, for it was past eight, and it was all-important that we should hear the opening blast of the nuptial pæan. Breathless, we arrived at the little mosque, close to the Porte de Tunis, at which the ceremony was to take place. All was dark and drear. There was no sign even of any preparation for a festivity. We turned in wrath to Larby, who remarked laconically that we had arrived too early, that the wedding would perhaps not take place till half-past eight, or at nine, or possibly at half-past nine—yes, probably at half-past nine. It would certainly take place when everyone was ready; but how could we be so unreasonable as to expect him to know when all would be ready? What matter? One could pass the time as pleasantly at the Porte de Tunis as outside the Porte de France. Would we allow him

to have the honour of offering us the hospitality of his café?

We felt that our indignation, which had seemed so righteous, was perhaps unreasonable. It was, alas! indisputably true that no one can tell when an Arab will be ready, not even another Arab. We felt a little ashamed of ourselves, and accepted with a smile of thanks his proffered hospitality, which, it may be observed parenthetically, did not mean that he expected to pay for the drinks.

As we sipped from tiny cups the thick, syrupy coffee, we tried to extract from our host some information about Arab married life; but our efforts did not meet with great success, as Larby had already been married for six months, and seemed to find the subject a stale and rather tiresome one. He told us, however, that he had paid 300 francs to his father-in-law, to compensate him for the loss of his daughter, and that his wife had brought nothing with her as regards dowry, except household linen; but he added that he was contented, as she worked at a carpet factory, and in that way contributed substantially to the family coffer. He had never seen his wife before his marriage night, the matter having been arranged entirely by his mother. I ventured to ask if she was pretty, to which he replied, with the air of a man who is grateful for small mercies: "Elle n'est pas mauvaise";

but there was certainly no hint of romantic attachment in the tone of his voice.

At last we heard the tom-toming of some drums and tambourines, and we hastened to join a growing crowd which had assembled outside the mosque. The bridegroom had arrived, and was wearing a "burnous de lux" over his head, the silk tassels flopping across his forehead. It was so arranged that we could see nothing of his face but one eye. "He wears his burnous in that way," explained Larby, "that he may hide his shyness." Candles, in groups of five, fastened to one handle, were being carried by small boys. They represented, in a very conventional form, Fatima's hand, which is believed to be the most lucky of all signs. Fatima's hand is always represented by three long fingers, with shorter fingers on either side of equal length. The Prophet's hand has a thumb and small finger.

Headed by the bridegroom and the guttering Fatima hands, we formed an irregular line, and marched into the courtyard of the mosque. It had a charming arcade of black and white arches, supported by polished marble columns—spoils, no doubt, from Carthage — and carved Corinthian capitals painted a cheerful pea-green. The bridegroom was one of the Aissaouia, and the mosque belonged to his sect. From the courtyard one could see, through an open door, into the sanctuary,

THE OLD PORTE DE TUNIS, KAIROUAN

Graham-Petrie

where, behind a handsome grill, lay the tomb of the marabout. A service was taking place there—not of the sensational kind described on another page, but just a quiet recitation from the Koran, to an accompaniment of much incense.

There really was no marriage service. Marriage with the Mohammedans is not, as with us, a holy ordinance of the Church. The courtyard of the mosque was merely used as a convenient meeting-place, and, as soon as the friends had all collected and the company was complete, we started forth for the house of the bridegroom. For the first few hundred yards our behaviour was irreproachably decorous, a few verses from the Koran being chanted to a soft accompaniment of the drums and tambourines; but, as soon as this was finished, general behaviour became distinctly lively, not to say rowdy. The boys screamed and shouted, mocking the shyness of the bridegroom by holding the candles as close as possible to his face, which had the effect of making him draw still tighter across his face the heavy burnous, which, on so hot a night, must have nearly stifled him. We passed out through the Porte de Tunis, through the big "sok," and then to the left, through narrow, winding streets, in the direction of the Mosque des Sabres.

A fresh note was given by the appearance of a

madman on the scene, who at once became a butt for the small wit of the company, while cheeky boys played practical jokes on him, and pushed him about; behaviour which did not seem to be in accordance with the tradition that madmen are holy, and should be treated with reverence. Larby explained that this particular idiot liked to be treated with familiarity, and certainly he seemed happy enough, and showed no signs of resentment.

At last we reached the bridegroom's abode. It was in a narrow street, and not at all imposing, though the bridegroom was rich, we were told; but, as a rule, nothing is visible of an Arab's house save an external wall and the front-door, as all windows, for the sake of privacy, open into a court-yard. Against the external wall there had been placed a table with seven chairs on it. The bridegroom, still closely veiled, sat down on the central chair, while his intimate friends supported him on either side. The candle-bearers formed themselves in line in front, and, with the whitewashed wall, on which had been painted in bright, crude colours many lucky emblems, the effect of light was interesting and heightened by the contrast of a mob of dark figures in the foreground. While the bridegroom was thus sitting outside, the band and the majority of the company had entered the

courtyard, where they pommelled their drums, and danced, and yelled, encouraged by the curious treble trill of the women on the house-tops and behind trellised doors and windows. This rather riotous scene lasted for about ten minutes, when everyone left the courtyard. The bridegroom then entered, accompanied only by half a dozen quite young boys, who bore the candles.

As far as we were concerned, the ceremony was finished, and we betook ourselves homewards, through the now silent streets, lighted only by a million stars. As we strolled along, Larby informed us that at about one in the morning the bridegroom would leave his house and visit the Turkish bath, where he would be met by all his more intimate friends. There they would take the bath together, the bridegroom paying the piper. The bath over, they would lounge and sleep in the cooling chambers till eleven o'clock, when all would repair to the bridegroom's house to partake of the banquet prepared for them.

One of the most picturesque incidents of native life in Kairouan is the ceremony of the circumcision. It is of course an important religious rite, but it is at the same time an occasion for much rejoicing and merry-making. Unlike the wedding function,

it takes place in broad daylight, generally at about three o'clock in the afternoon.

Barbaric strains of Arab music are heard in the distance, always calling to mind the noise of Scotch bagpipes; then gaily embroidered silk banners become visible, held high above the heads of the crowd. There is a continuous trilling on a very high note, from veiled women collected on the house-tops; and now the procession arrives. A score or more of little boys, about seven years old, are mounted on horses or mules, bedecked with trappings of scarlet, orange, green, and gold. The little fellows are dressed in velvet jackets, brocaded with gold, and wear pale pink or pale blue pantaloons. A brand-new Turkish fez adorns the head, and chains, bracelets, necklaces, pins, and all the articles of family jewellery available, are attached, in place and out of place, to his little figure. The horses are led at a slow pace by servants, generally negroes, and all the male relatives of the children walk by their side; incense is swung, and, with much noise and pomp, the procession slowly makes its way to the mosque. When the ceremony is finished, the procession is reformed and the children are taken back to their homes. On the following day a banquet, more or less important, according to the position of the parents, is given to relations and friends, who toast the health and piety of the youngster in coffee and

IN THE COOL SOUKS OF KAIROUAN

lemonade, the feast being much the same as that given after a wedding.

Somewhat similar, though less elaborate, are the rejoicings over the ceremony of the first shave, when, at the age of about three, the heads of little boys are officially shaved, one small tail being left, by which it is popularly supposed that the faithful will, eventually, be pulled up to paradise. Another explanation of the tail is that it was intended to provide a convenient handle by which, in time of war, the head would be carried by a Christian victor, thus preserving it from his defiling fingers.

CHAPTER XVI

A Hot Day in Kairouan

It was a hot day. I did not need to look at the thermometer to confirm my feelings on this subject. My mosquito curtain had become a tangled mass of netting, and my sheet had been unconsciously projected down to the region of my toes. Though the camels were still roaring, the donkeys braying, and the dogs howling, surely there was an enfeebled timbre in their various notes. I took a tepid bath, re-entered my pyjamas, and decided to spend a quiet morning in recording impressions of the previous day. Pyjamas, as morning attire, have the double advantage of being light and cool, and of allowing you to repeat, with the minimum of trouble, the luxury of your tepid tub. I settled down to work with my typewriter, but discovered, to my dismay, that its temper, usually so unruffled and imperturbable, was distinctly captious and cranky. It insisted on printing *x* for *z* and *p* for *q*, and *vice versa*, and surely — yes, certainly — its

voice, never too musical, was increasedly harsh and strident.

I thrust my typewriter into a corner, and arraying myself in more or less conventional attire, strolled out into the street. A watering-cart was passing by, and close behind it a row of exuberant youngsters, holding their skirts high above their waists, were enjoying the luxury of a free shower-bath, with many shrieks and howls of delight.

A hotel guide, who was sitting on the doorstep in a condition of semi-collapse, asked me if we had hot summers in England; and when I told him that I had just been reading in the paper of severe snow-storms, he revived at the very idea, and plied me with questions respecting the cost of the journey, the expenses of living, and the chances of obtaining employment in such a favoured land.

The wind was from the south, direct from the desert, and it blew on one's face like a blast from a furnace, so that, instead of welcoming a little breeze, one fled from it to the comparative coolness of stagnant air. Dogs lay panting with their tongues out; cats had retired into cellars; birds were chattering with astounding vigour, but whether in joy or misery I could not tell. Outside the Porte de France, in the full glare of the sun, several camels were contentedly munching their meal of prickly cactus, and, conscious of immunity from sunstroke,

blinked contemptuously at my pugaree. I crawled along the Grand Rue, which, in spite of the heat, was full of bustle and life. Here sartorial fashions had undergone considerable change. The Jews, and Arabs of the better class, displayed, in casting off the warm burnous, a surprising wealth of finery in embroidered silks of many colours. The workers in the little open shops had discarded the gandoura as well as the burnous, and were plying their trades in shirt-sleeves and quaint baggy pantaloons, a touch of colour being given by the tartan silk cummerbund, which even the poorest seem to possess.

Small urchins were running about encumbered by nothing but a scanty shirt, while many of the country folk wore only the haik, which, lending itself to much variety in the wearing, covered, on this piping hot morning, little but one shoulder and the waist. But the most startling evidence that summer had really arrived was given by the prevalence of the huge straw hat, the dimensions of which are never credited by those who have not seen them. They are really so very picturesque that the soft felt slouch-hat of a stray Sicilian seemed by comparison very commonplace; and as for the helmet, much affected by the French, it may indeed be practical, but surely no headgear ever devised was less becoming.

Nevertheless, had I possessed a hideous helmet,

I should certainly have worn it; but this not being the case, I decided to beat a retreat to some shady spot where cool drinks might be procurable. The Arab café is an admirable institution, and its attractions are numerous. It is gay, characteristic, interesting, and often beautiful; but from the practical point of view of providing the wherewithal for quenching thirst on a very hot day, its resources are pathetically inadequate.

The Café de Paris—Grand Cercle Civile Français, as it is pleased to style itself—made stronger claims on my patronage, and thither I retraced my steps in search of something iced.

CHAPTER XVII

The Camels of Kairouan: A Eulogy

The camel pervades Kairouan. Whenever I recall to mind that sacred city, my ear is aware of the dull, soft sound of the camel's leisurely tread. It is a quiet note, but one which is felt by the sensitive ear, despite the yells, the screams, the shouts, and vigorous chatter of the crowd. I can see, too, the loose, detached movements of his long, supple neck as he regards in turn everything in front of and around him, proclaiming by the expression of his sad, heavy-lidded eyes that all is vanity and beneath contempt to the superior intelligence of a philosophic camel.

At Kairouan the camel is ubiquitous; one meets him at every turn, pursuing every occupation, humble and exalted. He draws the carts, he treads the wheat, he grinds the corn, and he carries such enormous burdens of hay and fodder that one wonders if, indeed, his poor humped back would not be broken by adding the proverbial straw.

KAIROUAN CARD-PLAYERS

Though his occupations are menial, though his figure is grotesque and ungainly, though his eyes are often covered with blinkers and his mouth enclosed by a nose-bag, though his neck is denuded of its long, handsome collar and his body is clipped and shaved till his skin is as bare as a plucked ostrich, though he is lodged in filthy stables and beaten with sticks by heartless nigger-boys, he never loses his dignity of bearing. Very rarely does he allow his temper to be ruffled, or visibly resent the numerous indignities to which he is subjected. Sometimes when watching a camel, my thoughts have turned to the theories of the Theosophists, and I have wondered if this poor beast of burden could embody a human spirit patiently working out its penance for crimes committed in a previous and happier existence.

Every rule has its exception, and it must be admitted that the camel does utter a noisy protest when he is made to kneel down for mounting or loading. Perhaps his knees suffer from the position; they frequently look very sore. Possibly he is not, after all, entirely free from vanity, and is aware that the pose is an unbecoming one. It is true that, seen from behind, his anatomy is an incomprehensible jumble of dislocated joints and misplaced muscles; while from the front, however much he manœuvres his sinuous neck, he cannot look down

on you with his customary contempt from a level which is beneath your own. He endeavours, therefore, to frighten you by opening his mouth as wide as possible, disclosing enormous yellow teeth and a pea-soup tongue, at the same time uttering fearful sounds, which are an inadmirable imitation of the lion's roar. It is an alarming exhibition when you are mounting for the first time, as he turns his head completely round and stares you in the face.

But the manners of the camel are generally perfect, as is noticeable when one sees a score or more being watered at one of the many wells outside the walls of the town. Arranging themselves in regular and orderly rows on either side of the trough, they stretch out their long necks, and suck up the water with a solemnity and orderliness which would do credit to the formal etiquette of Chinese mandarins. There is no rude hustling for place, no indecorous haste, no selfish and ill-bred disregard of neighbours' needs and the rights of others. When a camel has assuaged his thirst, he quietly withdraws, and with a graceful motion of the neck which suggests a courteous bow of thanks, another takes his place. The wells are primitive and picturesque, and in the golden evening light, with the crenellated walls of the city or a limitless stretch of barren desert as a background, this every-day episode is quite impressive.

THE CAMELS OF KAIROUAN

Everyone knows that the camel is able to carry a store of water which will last him for many days when crossing the desert, but personally I was unaware of how the store was utilized. One day as I was watching some camels lying in the sun, I saw a small iridescent bubble appear from the mouth of one of them, which rapidly expanded till it was the size of a football. For a moment it hung there, looking quite beautiful, if a little uncanny, as it reflected all the colours of the rainbow in the brilliant glare of African noon. Then there came a liquid gurgling sound as the water in this bladder passed down the throat into the stomach. The camel was taking a few refreshing draughts from his internal reservoir. It is really quite a pretty spectacle, if you know what is happening, and are not afraid, as I was for the first moment, that the creature was going to turn himself entirely inside out. I also learnt, though I blush for my previous ignorance, that the camel's hump is not a mere useless eccentricity, but is a reserve store of food, being composed of fat which is absorbed into the system in the absence of other nourishment. By the size of the hump one can gauge the condition of a camel, those who have just crossed the desert from Timbuctoo having hardly any left.

The camels of Kairouan are chiefly pack camels, though every now and then a racer arrives from

elsewhere. The racing camel is of a different breed, and has very much longer legs, but his training has also much to do with his rapidity of pace. The instinct of all camels is to move in a leisurely fashion, except under the pressure of necessity. This pressure is brought to bear on the racing camel when he is very young indeed. As a mere baby he is made to earn his meals by racing after his mother, from whom he is kept back while on the march till she is nearly out of sight. Ravenous for his food, and also frightened at being left alone, he bounds after her, when set free, with all the rapidity he can command, and this trick, constantly repeated, greatly increases his powers of speed.

It is not the wearing of the purple which makes the emperor nor the holding of the sceptre which gives him might; yet as a jewel is enriched by its setting and a picture by its frame, so the quiet dignity of the camel rises to a regal level when decked with the rich paraphernalia of a lordly master. Draped to the knees with an open mesh of tasselled crimson wool, he bears, in a tent of radiant colour, the chattels, wives, and children of his owner. Silently he swings across the sand with stately measured stride as though to the rhythm of remembered music. Ship-of-the-Desert is his well-earned title, and on his trusty back one may laugh

at the terrors of the sandstorm and safely brave the barren billows of a dried-up sea.

O admirable creature! Monument of patience! Marvel of endurance! Thin of limb, but stout of heart, and swift of foot; spartan in habit, philosophic in temperament, dignified in bearing. Long may you grace the streets and marts of Kairouan, and may your lot be happier in a future state!

CHAPTER XVIII

The Future

It is hardly possible to those who have visited Tunisia, and made even a slight aquaintance of her people, not to indulge in some speculation, however futile, as to future development under French influence. It is to be feared that the more immediate and obvious effect will be the destruction of medieval picturesqueness, and the degradation of traditional handmade industries. There is already a weakening of the fanatical side of religion, and with it, alas ! a loss of the moral restraint imposed by the precepts of the Koran in such matters as abstaining from alcohol and performing religious ablutions. It is only too common to see the Arab drinking absinthe in the French cafés, and moderation is not a quality which he easily exercises in any direction, while to wash four or five times a day is a degree of hygienic cleanliness hardly to be realized unless enforced by religious command.

Frenchmen to whom I have spoken on the

subject invariably dismiss the unfortunate Arab as a hopeless fanatic, from whom it is useless to expect anything but hand labour; but the educated Arab of the new school indignantly denies that the Mohammedan religion is fanatical, or in any way incompatible with progress. In the current number of a French Tunisian journal there is an article written by an Arab, from which I quote the following passages:

"It is extraordinary to read periodically in the European Press that Mussulmen are fanatics, that Islam is incompatible with modern progress, and that its followers are an effete people. Those who launch such enormities on the public would do well if they were to study the subject from sources other than those of tourists, who know nothing of the Moslem world except what they hear from the guides of the "souks." Islam has never been the enemy of progress, and, on the contrary, progress should be the immediate corollary of the true Islam. I say the true Islam, because the ridiculous burlesques of the Dervishes, the Tourneurs, and the Aissaouas have nothing to do with Islam, and are, indeed, rigorously condemned by it. From the point of view of dogma, Islam presents nothing supernatural or mysterious; and its prescriptions are admitted to be socially moral and hygienic.

"The Koran tells us to adopt a constitutional form

of government. Your authority is the assent of the people, it says. Mussulmen were in the Middle Ages the only representatives of science and art, and their brilliant civilization shone from the shores of the Atlantic to the confines of China. Kairouan, Cordova, Granada, Damascus, Cairo, Bagdad, and Samarcande, suffice to show her grandeur. Many Europeans are pleased to call the Mussulman religion fatalistic. Nothing could be more false. Tradition says that a Bedouin who was visiting the Prophet wished to show his confidence in destiny by not tying up his camel. The Prophet reproved his negligence, saying to him, 'Attach the camel and have confidence. If, having been carefully tied up, the camel had strayed away, then thou couldst justly cry.' It was written, 'All Mussulmen have recourse to this comfort and consolation, having done all that they can to prevent evil and bring about good.'

"The prophet has, in effect, said: 'Arrange your worldly affairs as if you would live for ever, and prepare for your future life as if you would die to-morrow.'

"The Mussulman people are determined to put themselves in the line of progress, to expand their knowledge, and to improve their position. To what this determination may lead it would be difficult to predict, and we prefer to leave to events the task of raising the veil."

All this sounds very plausible, but it must be remembered that though the writer dismisses with contempt the superstitions of such sects as the Dervishes and the Aissaouas, the latter form a considerable proportion of the Tunisian population, and they certainly consider themselves good Moslems, though he does not.

The Tunisian is less fanatical than his brother in Morocco, less warlike, of a softer, more amiable, and perhaps more effeminate nature; but he is a confirmed fatalist, and his fatalism is not at all of the kind so cleverly expounded by the story of the Prophet and the Bedouin with his camel. This is no doubt greatly in his favour from the French point of view. He gave them little trouble to conquer; he accepts what he considers to be the inevitable.

It is very illustrative of his kind of fatalism that at Kairouan hardly any resistance to the French was offered, because a revered marabout had left a prediction, in writing, that the city would be taken by a European Power and its mosque desecrated. Though the Arab accepts his subjection with the philosophy at his command, he can hardly be expected to entertain any strong feeling of affection for his masters, and his mental attitude towards the French is probably much the same as that of the Egyptian towards the English, so clearly pictured by Lord Cromer in the following passage:

"The English engineer may give the fellah water for his fields, and roads, and railways, to enable him to bring his produce to market; the English financier may afford him fiscal relief beyond his wildest hopes; the English jurist may prevent his being sent to death or exile for a crime of which he is innocent; the English schoolmaster may open to him the door of Western knowledge and science; but the Egyptian Moslem, albeit he recognizes the benefits conferred on him by the Englishman, and acknowledges his superior ability, can never forget the fact that the Englishman wears a hat, while he himself wears a tarboosh or turban.

"Though he accepts the benefits willingly enough, he is always mindful that the hand which bestowed them is not that of a co-religionist, and it is this which affects him far more than the thought that the Englishman is not his compatriot. The differences between Eastern and Western habits of thought constitute a barrier interposed between the Egyptian and the Englishman almost as great as that resulting from differences of religion, ideas of government, and social customs. Indeed, the difference of mental attributes constitutes perhaps the greatest of all barriers."

Poor Tunisian Arab! His race has achieved wonders in the past, and who shall say that he is not predestined to future greatness? At present he

is a dreamer of dreams, who loves to sing of the conquest of Spain by his ancestors and to jingle the keys of Andalousian castles held by his forebears. He must wake up and tether his camel before trusting to Fate if he would cease to be protected by France.

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